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SEVEN PLAYS

By the Same Author

I WAS A GERMAN (*The Bodley Head*)
MASSES AND MAN (*The Bodley Head*)
THE BLIND GODDESS (*The Bodley Head*)
THE SWALLOW BOOK (*Oxford University Press*)
WHICH WORLD, WHICH WAY? (*Sampson, Low*)
BROKENBROW (*Nonesuch Press*)
THE MACHINE-WRECKERS (*Benn*)
HOPPLA! (*Benn*)

SEVEN PLAYS

by

ERNST TOLLER

comprising

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS
TRANSFIGURATION
MASSES AND MAN
HINKEMANN
HOPPLA! SUCH IS LIFE!
THE BLIND GODDESS
DRAW THE FIRES!

together with

MARY BAKER EDDY

by

Ernst Toller and Hermann Kesten

With

a new introduction by
the Author

LONDON
JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE
ON THE ENGLISH EDITIONS OF THE PLAYS

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS was first published by Ernest Benn Ltd. in 1923. MASSES AND MAN was first published by the Nonesuch Press in 1923, and reprinted by them in 1924 and 1926; it was reissued by the Bodley Head in 1934. HINKEMANN was first published by the Nonesuch Press under the title of BROKENBROW. HOPPLA! was first published by Ernest Benn Ltd. in 1928. THE BLIND GODDESS was first published by the Bodley Head in 1934. TRANSFIGURATION, DRAW THE FIRES! and MARY BAKER EDDY are here published in English for the first time.

PT2642
O65A25

SEVEN PLAYS first published in 1935

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Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE increasing persecution of the products of the mind indicates that the dictators of this world have realized the power of the word and the moral nature of art—and are afraid.

The days when society indulgently tolerated the artist as a sort of luxury unrelated to the real business of living, as a man whose moods were not to be taken seriously and whose weapons were aimed at empty air, were good neither for art nor for the artist. He forgot that technique is not enough, that character also is necessary; he forgot that it was not his task to serve the tastes of the day but to serve the eternal powers of life—truth, justice, joy, beauty, freedom, the mind and the spirit. He degenerated into the servant of his rulers; he became one voice among many, whose sole aim was to distract the mind from present reality. He was concerned not with illuminating the all too short span of time allotted the citizens of this earth, but with killing it. For this mad question, "What can I do to kill time?" was the dominating question of the age; an age when the few who were well fed were hard put to it to find interests for their leisure, and when the many who were hungry were still more hard put to it to find a moment of leisure for themselves. (But when they stood outside the closed doors of offices and factories because the ruling system had no use for them they had more leisure than they wanted, so much leisure, in fact, that they would have chosen any death but a natural one.)

The few regarded themselves as the lessees of art; they paid for it and their spirit was reflected in the art of their time. In their theatres the terrible story of mankind was twisted into empty trifling, all that was shown of the great social and religious struggles were ephemeral episodes with swaggering adventures in fancy dress; the tremendous drama of the human passions was reduced to the vitally absorbing question of which woman had betrayed which man. Betrayed and betrayers they all were; dramatists and public, producers and actors.

The plays collected in this volume are social dramas and tragedies. They bear witness to human suffering, and to fine

yet vain struggles to vanquish this suffering. For only unnecessary suffering can be vanquished, the suffering which arises out of the unreason of humanity, out of an inadequate social system. There must always remain a residue of suffering, the lonely suffering imposed upon mankind by life and death. And only this residue is necessary and inevitable, is the tragic element of life and of life's symbolizer, art.

Four of these plays were written in prison, others were banned. And, finally, when a dictator came to power in Germany, a man who tolerated no writers unless they were prepared to become his slaves and obey him like dogs and glorify his inhuman teachings, they were one and all publicly burnt.

But even the power of dictators is limited. They can kill the mind for a time and they can kill it in any one land. But across the border they are impotent; across the border the power of the word can save itself and harbour itself; the word, which in the long run is stronger and greater than any dictator, and which will outlast them all.

Thus these plays come to be published in the land of Shakespeare and Shelley, the scene of the author's involuntary yet voluntary exile, the land which has become a second home to him.

LONDON, 17 *October* 1934.

ERNST TOLLER.

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS

A Drama of the English Luddites in a prologue and five acts

English version by ASHLEY DUKES

PERSONS OF THE PROLOGUE

Lord Chancellor of England
Lord Byron
Lord Castlereagh
Other Peers.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Jimmy Cobbett
John Wibley
Charles
Bob
William
Edward
Arthur
George
Ned Lud
} (weavers)

A Pedlar
A Beggar
Two Drunkards
An Officer
Henry Cobbett (overseer)
Mrs. Cobbett (mother of Henry and Jimmy)
Old Reaper
Teddy Wibley
Mary Wibley (Old Reaper's daughter)
Ure (a manufacturer)
Ure's little Daughter
Man with a Barrow
Deaf and Dumb Man
Blind Man
Women Weavers
Children
Margaret Lud
Young Lud
A Streetwalker
Ure's Guest
An Engineer

The Scene is laid in London and Nottingham, about the years 1812–15

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS

PROLOGUE

(*The House of Lords*, 1812. *In the middle the* LORD CHANCELLOR *on the woolsack. To right and left of him seats for* LORD BYRON *and* LORD CASTLEREAGH; *in the first row of the theatre sit other peers.*)

LORD CHANCELLOR. A Government Bill to render the destruction of machinery punishable by death. The Bill was passed by a majority at the first reading. We will proceed to the second and third readings. —Lord Byron.

LORD BYRON. All of you know, my lords, why we are met.
The working weavers are confederate
Against their masters; they have used duress
And plan destruction. But whose policy
Taught them the trade of havoc, whose the hand
That undermined the welfare of the realm?
It was the policy of robber wars,
The myth of heroes from your history books,
That grew to be the curse of living men!
O, can you wonder, lords, if in these times
When fraud and shameless greed like mildew tarnish
Our highest ranks, the working folk forget
The duty that they owe the State, and add
Guilt to the burden of their penury?
Theirs is a crime, my lords, I grant, and yet
Such deeds are daily done in Parliament.
The evildoer in high places knows
How to slip through the meshes of the law:
The workman does his penance for the crime
That hunger, hunger drove him to commit.
Machinery stole ground beneath his feet,
Thrust him relentless on the road to want.
Rebellion cried within him:
Nature demands that all shall live!
Nature denies that some must feast
While others famish! Noble lords,
The labourer stood in readiness
To till the fallow fields of England;
Only the spade he held was not his own.

He was a beggar. Who rose up
And said: We help you in your need?
Blind passion was the end for all of us.
You call these men and women rabble,
Cry out upon the many-headed monster,
Demand its leaders shall be straightway hanged.
Where Mercy starves, the State must thirst for blood.
The sword, as ever, is a shift of fools
To hide their folly.
Let us consider well this rabble, lords:
It is the rabble digging in your fields,
It is the rabble serving in your halls,
It is the rabble whence your soldiers spawn,
It is the strong arm that sets you in power
To bid defiance to an enemy world.
And it will bid defiance to its masters
If it be driven madly to despair.
And one thing more I say to you, my lords,
For wars your purse was ever open wide;
A tenth part of the money that you gave
To Portugal in "service of mankind"
Would have sufficed to still the pangs at home
And give the gallows peace. I saw in Turkey
The most despotic rule the world has known,
But nowhere dearth in plenty such as here
In Christian England.
And what is now your remedy for the ill?
Hanging, the nostrum of all penny-quacks
Who burrow in the body of the State!
Is not the law bespattered to the crown?
Shall blood be shed until it steams to Heaven
In witness of your guilt? Is hanging medicine
For hunger and despair? Suppose, my lords,
Your bill made law. Regard the prisoner
Brought up for judgment, dull with misery,
Weak with starvation, weary of a life
That by your reckoning is of less account
Than one dismantled loom. Regard this man,
Torn from the family whose breadwinner
He may not be (although the will is there),
Dragged into court. Who will pronounce the verdict?
Twelve honest men and true? Never, my lords!
Command twelve butchers as your jurymen,
And make a hangman judge!

(*Ironical laughter has broken out among the peers.*)

LORD CHANCELLOR. Lord Castlereagh.

LORD CASTLEREAGH. You have heard, my lords,
The speech of this most honourable peer.
His was a poet's voice, and not a statesman's.
Poets may dream in verses and write dramas,
But statecraft is the business of hard men.
It is a poet's licence to espouse
The cause of vagabondage; statesmen stand
By principle alone. Poverty is a law
Of God and Nature, and compassionate scruples
Must have no place in legislators' minds.
The reverend Malthus showed that scores of thousands
Too many live in England, and the earth denies
Bread to the masses that encumber her.
The miseries we see are God-ordained
And we must bow in silence to His Will.
Plague, war, and famine yearly rid the world
Of needless burdens. Shall we combat Nature?
That would be criminal. We must accept
The world we know, the law we comprehend,
And aid them with the power we can dispose.
The more we help the poor, the more they breed.
They *must* not multiply on England's soil!
And every means that hinders them is just,
If only it accord with moral practice
And Divine precept.

LORD BYRON. Let the children starve!

LORD CASTLEREAGH. Your *beau geste*, my lord, we must admire,
But as a statesman I reply with coldness,
The more the infant ranks are thinned by Death
The better for our children and our land.
There are too many of us, honoured poet;
An iron fact that all our sympathy
Can never soften. I would beg my lords
Consider one thing only, that the welfare
Of England is at stake. Plots are afoot
To break the quiet of our peaceful realm.
If Justice have a temple, let me lay
This bill upon her altar, confident
That sober statecraft will outweigh the voice
Of poetry and passion.

(*Applause of the peers.*)

LORD CHANCELLOR. The debate is ended. We will proceed to a division. Those noble lords in favour of the Bill?

(*All but* LORD BYRON *rise.*)

Those against?

(LORD BYRON *rises in his place. Laughter.*)

I observe one vote. The bill is passed. The sitting is adjourned until to-morrow.

(*The stage darkens. End of the prologue.*)

ACT ONE

A street in Nottingham on a sunny day in Spring. Children with pinched and wan faces, in ragged clothes, squat dully round a wooden framework in the shape of gallows. JIMMY COBBETT, *in mechanic's clothes, comes from a side street and looks on.*

JIMMY. What, idle all? Is this a holiday?

FIRST BOY. The guys are to be hanged.

JIMMY. The guys?

FIRST GIRL. Yes, guys. They're hidden in the house of Weaver John.

SECOND BOY. I've seen them.

JIMMY. Are all of you at drudgery so young?

FIRST BOY. My brother, four years old, stands at the loom.

FIRST GIRL. Teddy can hardly walk and earns three pence a day; three real pennies.

(SECOND GIRL *begins to cry.*)

JIMMY. Why are you crying, little one? (*She does not answer.*) Tell me, for I keep secrets.

SECOND GIRL. O, sir, I can't tell . . . but the sun's so warm to-day!

JIMMY (*after a silence*). Children, do you know any games?

FIRST GIRL. We are so hungry, sir!

JIMMY. Do you love fairy tales?

SECOND BOY. "Fairy tales," what are those?

JIMMY. Strange tales of far-off lands of wonder,
Tales of bright meadows where the children play.

SECOND GIRL. Oh, play! Tell us one, sir!

JIMMY. A rich man—Golden Belly was his name—
With several castles all as big and fine
As Mr. Ure's new house up on the hill,
Lived with an only daughter he called Joy.
She wore a golden frock, and played all day
With golden playthings in a golden garden.

FIRST BOY. With golden playthings?

FIRST GIRL. Was she never at the loom?

JIMMY. Never. The man was rich, his child called Joy.
And not far from their castle lived a weaver
Who also had an only child, called Sorrow,
A meagre boy with puny chest and legs
Like sally-rods—a starveling such as thou.

And one day little Sorrow, with a load
Of linen in a basket on his arm
Came to the castle door. He saw the golden toys,
The golden garden——

(*The* THIRD BOY *has crept aside to rummage in the gutter.*)

THIRD BOY. Hurrah, I've found a crust!
FIRST GIRL. Give us a bite!
FIRST BOY. You cheat! We listen and you look for bread!
That isn't fair! Give here! We'll share it!

(*The children wrestle with the third boy.*)

THIRD BOY. I won't! I won't! I'll bite you—see!
SECOND BOY. Bite, will you! I'll teach you to bite!

(*There is a scuffle for the crust. The* THIRD BOY *runs away, and the others chase him.*)

JIMMY. Called Joy . . . called Sorrow . . .

(*From a side street comes a procession of Weavers, men and women, in ragged clothes. Some of the men wear paper caps. In front are held aloft three guys or puppets representing strike-breakers. Uproar.* JOHN WIBLEY *mounts a step at the base of the gallows.*)

JOHN WIBLEY (*to the guys*). Turncoats and traitors! Scabs of master's men!
Blacklegs and varlets! Greedy wolfish pack
That lap the hunger-sweat of poverty!
With one accord we took our stand to strike,
No hand's turn at machines! And then these toads,
These buttock-men went creeping to the mill
To beg the favour of a place! May Hell
Devour your flesh, and twist your bones with tongs,
May Nightmare grind a hoof upon your hearts,
Your gullets be enlac'd with knotted cords
Dipped in hot oil! May you be put in chains
Before a liquor-vat, and when your tongues are dry
See wrinkled hags befoul your drinking-pot!

(*The guys are hanged amid plaudits. Two weavers take place to right and left of the gallows, and sing in a monotone.*)

FIRST WEAVER. They served the master, but betrayed the man.
SECOND WEAVER. So hang them high!
FIRST WEAVER. They broke their faith and kneeled at Mammon's throne.
SECOND WEAVER. So hang them high!
FIRST WEAVER. They sold their bodies and befouled their minds.
SECOND WEAVER. So hang them high!
FIRST WEAVER. If they're in Heaven, who can be in Hell?

SECOND WEAVER. They shall not come to Heaven. Hang them high!

CHORUS (*dancing round the gallows*).

Ba, ba, black sheep!
Ba, ba, black sheep!

FIRST WEAVER. Blackleg, Blackleg, have you any wool?

SECOND WEAVER. Yes, sir, yes, sir, three bags full.
One for the master, one for the man,
And one for the trimmers who serve whom they can.

Chorus—Ba, ba, black sheep!
Ba, ba, black sheep!

FIRST WEAVER. Down, down, down and down,
Pauper and drudge and slave!
From moor and meadow, street and loom,
From sty and dunghill, hutch and tomb,
Hark to the thunder-call of doom:
Work or the grave!

SECOND WEAVER. Out, out, out and out,
With despot, tyrant, waster!
What, shall we toil for idlers' gain?
Who will not work with might and main
Is England's curse and freedom's bane;
Our right is master!

(*The Weavers pull up the beams of the gallows, and go off singing.*)

SONG.

On, on, on and on,
The coward's day is past!
The night is flown, the dawn is bright,
The measure's full, the sands are light,
The battle joined, the end in sight;
Who will stand fast?

(NED LUD *and* CHARLES *remain.*)

NED LUD. I'll wager that not ten of them have shirts to their backs.

(*A* PEDLAR *comes, crying his wares.*)

PEDLAR. Parr's Life Pills! Parr's Life Pills! No weaver need starve. Without bite or sup they make you look like England's queen. Parr's Life Pills! Parr's Life Pills!

(*An old* BEGGAR *comes, looking for crusts.*)

BEGGAR. I can see well this is no working day. The children—devil's brood—have swallowed all.

(*He comes to* JIMMY.)

Sir, give me a halfpenny.

JIMMY. I am a man as poor as you. An out-of-work, a tramp, well-nigh starving.

BEGGAR. The man for my money then. Do you think I would beg from a bladder of lard? If there were none but rich on this earth, all beggars would famish. The poor share and share alike. That's how they come to Heaven.

JIMMY. How so?

BEGGAR. Know you not the words of the Lord Jesus? It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. The rich are close and love not giving; that is why they grow pot-bellied. The gate of the Kingdom is narrow; just big enough for shrunken starvelings like our poor. And the gate is low. A tall man such as you can scarce pass through for the cap he wears. You stand in peril of damnation.

JIMMY (*giving him his cap*). Friend, you have missed your calling. You should have been a parson, or a Parliament man.

BEGGAR. 'Tis true, I am no common beggar. I am a beggar with a greed for renown. I am looking for the man who will give me land worth three hundred pounds sterling. Once, long ago, I saw Westminster Palace from the street; and the fancy takes me to see it from within. Farewell, friend. The sun loves men as young as you, and it is no more than courtesy to bare the head to a lover.

JIMMY. Your love is the bottle, it seems. And I fear my cap will go over the potman's counter.

BEGGAR. Friend, you are an Irishman. You have eaten too many potatoes. They work windily on the stomach, and the bad air is belched in moralizing. Get you a pig instead. But don't mate with him. They say the Irish love their pigs so dearly that they sleep with them. That way lies the breeding of pigheads; and we have enough of them in England already.

(*The* BEGGAR *goes off.* TWO DRUNKARDS *come in, arm in arm.*)

FIRST DRUNKARD (*sings*). Sharpen the scythe! The corn is ripe,
The children cry for bread.
The fields are watered with their tears,
Dunged by their fathers' dead!
When hands were cold and hearts were numb
The winter seed was spread.

SECOND DRUNKARD. Blessed are the poor in spirit, saith the Lord. And to whom He loveth, He giveth. What, are we poor in spirit? Gin, gin for my penny! Hast a penny, brother?

FIRST DRUNKARD. A penny! Ha, ha! Where kings line their closets with the gold of the Easterlings! I have a hundred shillings, man—in my belly! My wife drinks gin with me—and my children too. . . . They can take their bottle—ha, ha!—better than you! The youngest takes gin from the breast—gin—gin——

BOTH DRUNKARDS (*singing*). Gin—gin—gin—gin——

(*They pass on.* JIMMY *comes up to* NED LUD.)

JIMMY. You are Ned Lud?

NED LUD. So they call me. And you?

JIMMY. A workman like yourself.

NED LUD. From Nottingham?

JIMMY. Nottingham born and bred. For years a vagabond; now back again for the first time. I wandered over England and the Continent.

NED LUD. I greet you then as comrade on your home-coming.

JIMMY. Thank you, Ned Lud. . . . The weavers are on strike?

CHARLES. The steam-engine is in the town!

NED LUD. They seek to press us into fearful slavery!

JIMMY. Therefore the fight?

NED LUD. They would put us in irons, and chain us to a monster. A spindle driven by steam that clutches men and whirls them round and slings them into hell!

JIMMY. The spinning-mule is in the village.

NED LUD. Every man on God's earth has a right to live by the work of his hands. Every man is born free, and has a right to a trade. . . . A holy right! Whoever robs him of it is a thief! The masters betrayed us when they brought the steam-engine into the town! What does our handicraft count for now?

JIMMY. But you had the spinning-jenny?

CHARLES. That was the first offence against our rights.

NED LUD. One weaver worked three spindles; the jenny drives eighteen. It robs five weavers of their daily bread. A thousand spindles, so they say, are driven by the mule. Now comes the day when Ure would lead us to the knackers' yard. "Hey, slaughter all the pack! I have the steam-engine!" We must stand together. No hand's turn at machines! We would live by the work of our hands, as we have always done. We are men! Engine-wages are devil's wages. We have joined hands. John Wibley is our leader. To-night we meet in session at his house.

JIMMY. And you make war on the machines?

NED LUD. Our fists are still our own!

JIMMY. I know the steam-engine, and say that what you plan is madness!

NED LUD. Mad though it be, vain though it be, we must fight, for we are men! If we endure the yoke we are no more than brutes.

JIMMY. I know that this machine is our inevitable lot—our destiny.

NED LUD. Your words are strange to me.

JIMMY. I will open your blind eyes. I go with you to Weaver Wibley. There let me speak.

NED LUD. See, here come soldiers!

(*From a side street comes a platoon of soldiers, followed by a crowd.*)

THE OFFICER. By the King's Majesty it is proclaim'd—
Now doff your caps, you ill-condition'd pack!—
That high authority is made aware
Of leagues in secret join'd by lawless men
Against the peace and order of this realm.
Therefore *We do prohibit* all endeavour
By faction to increase the proper wage
Or lessen the appointed hours of labour.
We do prohibit every let or hindrance
To diligent subjects in their lawful trade,
Whether by threat, persuasion, or request.
We do forbid all workmen to forsake
In common cause their service or employ.
We do forbid the hoarding up of gold
For times when strikers shall abandon duty.
We do allow the honourable masters
By their own measure to decree the wage
And working hour. For those who disobey
Our mandate, *We ordain* a penalty
Up to, but not above, ten years' imprisonment.
Those faithful subjects who inform the law
Of secret leagues, and show the hiding-place
Of wrongful and forbidden funds, receive
The half of all such monies in reward.
The other half is forfeit to the Crown.
Let all men go their ways. God Save the King!

(*Flourish of trumpets. The soldiers march off.*)

NED LUD. Half for brother Judas, half for brother King. An honourable share indeed!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene I

A parlour, where Henry Cobbett *and his mother are at their midday meal.*

Henry. I hate this onion-sauce, this gutter-seasoning!

Mother (*meekly*). Your father always——

Henry. Father! Father! I know his style. The dainty dish at the wedding breakfast—roast beef with onion sauce! Then onions for Christmas, Easter, Whitsun. Father had no enemy but himself.

Mother. His wages——

Henry. Nonsense. Want of ability. He remained a stocking-weaver to the end. I was an overseer by thirty. Mark the difference! Let us drop the subject. The thought of those days turns the stomach sour.

(Jimmy *enters.*)

Jimmy. Mother!

Mother. My boy! To see you once again——

Jimmy. Good day, Henry.

Henry. So you have grown into a man—at last. To judge by your clothes you've little else to boast of.

Mother. You must be tired and hungry. Sit with us.

(Jimmy *seats himself.*)

Jimmy. You're fine and cosy here.

Henry. What is your profession?

Jimmy. A tramp, mechanic, out-of-work.

Henry. That's no profession.

Jimmy. I'm a workman. A weaver.

Henry. That's no honour.

Jimmy. The Queen has not a greater in her gift.

Henry. A strange sort of honour—to be a gutter-snipe!

Jimmy. Do you call yourself a gutter-snipe? The bird fouls its own nest.

Henry. You're making a mistake.

Mother. Henry's not a weaver now. He's worked his way right up. He's overseer for Mr. Ure.

Jimmy. If he abuses workmen, he abuses me.

Henry. It's not my fault my brother is a vagabond.

Jimmy. And why do you live at ease and eat your bellyful? Because the vagabonds give their strength, their lives.

HENRY. A law of Nature. If the strong are to live, the weak must go to the wall. Do you ask me to *sink* again? Do you ask me to let go what I have won?

MOTHER. You'll stay in Nottingham, Jimmy?

JIMMY. I came in time, it seems. The weavers are on strike.

HENRY (*sharply*). What's that?

JIMMY. They claim their rights as men.

HENRY. Words! Phrases!

JIMMY. Is misery a phrase? Starvation? Or child drudgery?

HENRY. You are a rebel.

JIMMY. If love of justice is rebellion, yes.

HENRY. You must leave Nottingham.

JIMMY. There's no call to go.

HENRY. But my position——

JIMMY. No concern of mine.

HENRY. A pretty guest we're entertaining, mother!

MOTHER. Jimmy, you're not in earnest?

JIMMY. Never more in earnest, mother.

HENRY. Look at the rabble you would make your friends. On Sunday, the Lord's Day, they roll from one pothouse to the next. The womenfolk are on the streets, girls of twelve sell themselves at every corner. The children steal. Not long ago the police dragged the Trent for a child's body and found sixty! Sixty murdered children!

JIMMY. Who were the fathers? You and your like, your gentlemen with cash to buy your fancy. Why did the mothers throw their holy babes into the river? Because not one of the fathers stood by them! Because your church makes a shame of their miracle and an infamy of their honour. Why do the men lie drunk in the inns? Because their houses are stinking hutches, fit for brutes! The workmen are better than their masters. For every child who goes hungry, for every man in rags, for every roofless, homeless vagabond, for every living soul that cries for beauty and freedom and is driven to live in squalor, you must answer at the reckoning!

HENRY. The weavers are in league against the engine. Do you justify that crime?

JIMMY. Workmen will make themselves the masters of machinery!

HENRY. Then I've said all. Go your way, I'll go mine. I shall disown you well enough. No kith nor kin of mine. No kith nor kin. Mother, now take your choice.

(HENRY *leaves the room.*)

MOTHER (*after a silence, with an effort*). No—my boy—no! To go back to the old life, the old misery—no! I can't! The hungry years, the bitter winters—no! To count the pence to buy potatoes—no! And the dirt! The rags! I'm old and ill. Don't ask me, for I can't!

JIMMY. That means you're sending me away?

MOTHER (*sobbing*). I'm over sixty. To live it all again—no, no!

(*She goes out.* JIMMY *alone, then the* BEGGAR.)

BEGGAR. Charity, kind sir!

JIMMY. The sight of you is a charity, friend, though you come out of time.

BEGGAR. No time is ever out of time, says worldly wisdom. When Time rides an Arab, he runs overtime, and when he straddles an old nag, he's killing time. But when he mounts a wench, then 'tis breeding-time. Has your sweetheart sent you packing?

JIMMY. Mother and brother sent me packing. Mother and brother.

BEGGAR. Old Age and Middle Age, friend. You might have fared worse. It was Youth who showed *me* the door. My son found no call to harbour cripples; he was for every man earning his keep. He found it was my merry sport that set him in this world; and now 'twas his turn to dance. He found me irksome. There, maybe, he was right.

JIMMY. Then you and I can shake hands.

BEGGAR. Aye, so we can. Is that your dinner on the table? I'll take it as an earnest of good-will—though you forgot your manners and didn't ask me. And what will you be—a beggar?

JIMMY. No, friend, I must work. We have a fight before us. The weavers are up and on the march.

BEGGAR. So you would lead them, would you? Then it will be my turn to be breadwinner for us both. Workmen as good Samaritans—I want no better. But workmen as masters—there you'll see miracles indeed! The mill-owners set the Spanish fly on your breast; but the weavers will set three—one on your breast, one on your hips, and one no matter where. I wish you joy of their service!

JIMMY. You're bitter.

BEGGAR. Say truthful, friend.

JIMMY. All men may not be like your son.

BEGGAR. Friend, friend of mine, have you a roof to-night?

JIMMY. No.

BEGGAR. Then let me offer you the state-room in my palace. You shall be guest of honour there. Lord Rat shall be your valet, and Lady Louse prepare your bath, and Mistress Flea-in-Waiting be your merry bed-fellow.

JIMMY. Show me your lodging. I have grave affairs to settle this evening. Then I will come to you.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

Scene II

A room in John Wibley's *cottage, furnished with a table, two broken-down chairs, and two weaving stools.* Old Reaper *at the window and* Teddy.

Old Reaper. For it is written: As I live, saith the Lord. To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that I am Lord. And here stands one whose knees are not bowed, and whose tongue does not confess Him.

Teddy. Grandpa, I am so hungry!

Old Reaper. Does He let you hunger?

Teddy. Grandpa! (*A silence.*) Grandpa, I want to be able to run like Mr. Ure's little girl. But my legs—look at them! (*A silence.*) If I had bread to eat, oh, then I'd play! (*A silence.*) Grandpa, why don't you give me bread? I'm hungry, hungry. . . .

Old Reaper. But I have none, I have none! He—up there—has it all, all! He up there! He lets the just famish and the unjust live in feasting. O Thou, Thou Murderer of children! But wait, Teddy, wait! The day of deeds will come! A fight for life and death—for life and death. Teddy, where's my gun?

Teddy. Here, Grandpa, here's the stick.

Old Reaper. That's no stick, Teddy, that's a gun. I know One who must fall. (*He takes the stick and aims upward. He makes as if to pull a trigger, and lets the stick drop. Whimpering.*) The trigger's rusted. It—won't—fire!

Teddy. Grandpa, have you seen the steam-engine? They say it has a hundred heads.

Old Reaper. Perhaps it is God. It may be God. Where—where is the engine?

Teddy. I'll take you to see it, if you like. But not a word to father. Do you promise?

Old Reaper. Take me. Take me to it. I may be on His track.

Teddy. To-morrow night—when father's fast asleep.

(*Enter* John Wibley.)

John Wibley. Mother not in yet?

Teddy. No, father.

John Wibley. The gun again, old fellow? You'll not hit the mark.

Old Reaper. The wise in their own conceit have become fools.

(John Wibley *laughs.*)

Teddy. Father, there's a molehill in the yard. Shall we catch the mole?

John Wibley. Let the creature live.

Old Reaper. There, it's in order. My gun, my precious . . .

(MARY, *a young handsome woman, comes in.*)

MARY. Evening, all.

JOHN WIBLEY. Did Cobbett pay your wages?

MARY (*throwing money on the table*). Fivepence.

JOHN WIBLEY. The cur! The cur!

MARY. Leave me the half. We've not a loaf to eat. Last week I gave you all I earned—and all I made as well.

JOHN WIBLEY. See—not a penny left.

MARY. Have you been gaming?

JOHN WIBLEY. And if I had? I would go whoring if I were a gentleman. I don't need money for myself.

MARY. The thatch is leaky. Rain drips on us in the night. Wet straw. I have no money; 'tis your weavers take it all. Not one of them comes near us but to draw his pay.

JOHN WIBLEY. Debts at the grocer's?

MARY. Five shillings. Oh, this poor man's cheat! Mixing the sugar with the grounds of rice, the flour with chalk and plaster! When Margaret's babe was sick and she bought cocoa, at a thieving price, she found red earth and mutton-fat rubbed into it!

JOHN WIBLEY. Have you got supper?

MARY. A couple of potatoes, if you want them.

JOHN WIBLEY. Later. Now, Mary, come, be sensible. Go to him, play the lover, let him kiss you. Without your help I lose my standing with the men. He gives you money. Do as he bids, and see the wages paid before you kiss. Paid in advance, remember! The comrades come to-night. You're in the way at home.

MARY. Oh God! I'll do it, yes, I'll do it. This life of ours! Come, Teddy, off to bed and sleep. When you wake up you'll find a fresh loaf on your pillow. Good night, father. Sleep well.

OLD REAPER. Bathe thy limbs in balsam, daughter. For the day draws near when thou shalt be crowned queen among daughters.

MARY. With thorns, father.

(*She goes out.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. Courage, old man, the day of deeds will come!

(*Enter* CHARLES, BOB, WILLIAM, EDWARD, ARTHUR, GEORGE, *and other workmen.*)

CHARLES. It stands in place in the great weaving-shed!

BOB. A Juggernaut. All arms and gaping jaws!

WILLIAM. A monster made to tear us limb from limb!

EDWARD. This is the devil that the masters serve!

GEORGE. With us for wages!

ALL. Aye, with us for wages!

OLD REAPER. They have forsaken the straight road and gone astray.

JOHN WIBLEY. Silence, old fool. Let us take counsel, neighbours. The masters snap their fingers at our strike.

(OLD REAPER *goes out.*)

CHARLES. In church their parsons thunder, and they set the women at our throats!

BOB. The King makes outlaws of all secret leagues.

JOHN WIBLEY. May the last King be strangled with the bowels
Of the last parson!

CHARLES. Amen to that, say I.

BOB. But what comes next?

JOHN WIBLEY. Are all our sentries posted?

CHARLES. A hundred yards around they stand and watch.

JOHN WIBLEY. Ure held us for his chattels, to be bought,
Worn threadbare, thrown away. Now the machine
Stands in our place, and mastery turns to madness.
This hellish engine-monster every day
Devours the wages of a thousand men.

CHARLES. The man who steals our work sins against Nature!

CRIES. Sins against Nature!

JOHN WIBLEY. They plan to hunt the men from every town
And chain the children to their devilments.
'Tis said this engine runs for babes of three.

ALBERT. And if they leave us at the engine, what sort of drudgery will it be? We shall tie up broken threads and tend the hungry beast like prentice farmhands!

EDWARD. No longer weavers. Men without a trade.

JOHN WIBLEY. Ure has sold you to the devil! Can you call yourselves your own?

ARTHUR. What will become of us?

ALBERT. Three days I let them chain me to the engine
In Carlton, then I fled. This devil Steam
Clutches you in a vice and tears
The heart from out the breast.
And then he saws and saws and saws
The living body into pieces.
Charles, you shall be the Foot, to tread,
To tread, to tread your life away . . .
With slacken'd arms and clouded eyes
And back bent crooked at the mill.
George, you shall be the Hand, to tie
And knot and fasten, knot and tie,
With deafen'd ears and creeping blood
And dry-rot in the brain. . . .

CHARLES. With slacken'd arms, with clouded eyes——

GEORGE. With deafen'd ears, with creeping blood——

WILLIAM. What if the engine stops, and Master Steam
Quits work? Then where are Hand and Foot and drudge?

JOHN WIBLEY. Ravens, tame ravens that the master drives
Into a winter's night, to freeze and die!
To freeze and die!
CHARLES. But we are men!
JOHN WIBLEY. We were, once on a time.
CHARLES. It must not be! Why, 'tis a mortal sin!
GEORGE. A curse on Steam!
EDWARD. Ten plagues!
WILLIAM. Bound hand and foot!
OTHERS (*dully*). Bound hand and foot!
JOHN WIBLEY. One way is left. We must defy the engine.
A Moloch stands in Nottingham. Strike him down!
A monster that will breed his hateful kind
In thousands! Swear defiance here and now!
WEAVERS. We swear it!
JOHN WIBLEY. Let Moloch welter once in his black blood,
And Ure will never dare to make us fast
To such another Hell-spawn!
Death to the engine, comrades!
War on the tyrant Steam!
Death to the engine!
War on the tyrant Steam!
WEAVERS. Death to the engine!
War on the tyrant Steam!

(JIMMY *and* NED LUD *enter. The Weavers turn to* JIMMY *in alarm.*)

NED LUD. A comrade born in Nottingham. For years a traveller, now returned.

(JIMMY *greets the Weavers.*)

NED LUD (*to* WIBLEY). Agreed?
WIBLEY. Agreed.

(JIMMY *comes forward.*)

JIMMY. On what?
JOHN WIBLEY. This very night we shall destroy the engine.
JIMMY. Madmen that you are!
JOHN WIBLEY. Are you another in the engine's pay?
JIMMY. Give me an hour to speak.
JOHN WIBLEY. Not half an hour remains.
NED LUD. Let him be heard.
JIMMY. Friends, you ran headlong when the spectre of this engine raised his cruel head. Despair unmanned you. It seemed a vampire stretching out its bloody claws to clutch your souls. A god, a devil chaining you to drudgery. A monster made to lame your bodies, blunt your minds, and foul your honourable trade.
ALBERT. And so it is!

JIMMY. There are other enemies, stronger than this frame of iron and wood they call an engine.

JOHN WIBLEY. He's making game of us!

CHARLES. Let him hold his tongue!

NED LUD. We gave him leave to speak.

JIMMY. An enemy lives in yourselves! He grips your minds. He swims in your life-blood. He has dulled and deadened the spirit in you.

JOHN WIBLEY. Oho, a parson!

CHARLES. See here, this is no church!

ALBERT. We are men, not women!

NED LUD. We must hear him out.

JIMMY. Brothers, look into yourselves! How joyless, how uneasy are your lives! Do you still know that there are forests? Dark, secret forests that awaken buried springs in men? Forests that quiver with stillness? Forests where men pray? Forests where men dance?

What is your trade to you? Are you weavers of your own free choice? Did you give yourselves to the task humbly and joyfully, like men who create? No! Your work was drudgery, wage-service, necessity.

Look into your children's faces! They are chalky, sickly. Boys of ten stumble like greybeards.

JOHN WIBLEY. Is poverty our fault?

JIMMY (*vehemently*). Your fault is that you gave in without a struggle, instead of standing shoulder to shoulder like a band of working brothers—instead of *living* for comradeship and bringing your stone, each of you, to build the house of justice!

Death is here among you! He crouches in your weary eyes. He burdens your heavy steps. He has killed your joy and laughter.

And yet dreams are in you! Dreams of wonderlands. Dreams of the world of justice, dreams of towns and countries and continents linked in common labour, each for all and all for each!

Brothers, join hands! Begin! Begin! Not I and I and I! No! World and we and thou and I! If you *will* the comradeship of workers, it is yours!

O, this winnowing will shake the chaff from your souls! The earth will sprout again! And the tyrant of machinery, conquered by your own creative spirit, will be your tool and your servant!

NED LUD. Our Tool . . .

JIMMY. What if you laboured to produce for all and not for Mammon—for service, not for gain? What if instead of sixteen hours you worked but eight? With the machine no more your enemy, but your helper! What if your children, freed from drudgery, grew up in sunny schoolrooms, gardens, playing fields?

Your misery holds you by the throat! Already you are well-nigh strangled. Be men and fight! Rouse yourselves! When leaves are rotten, let them dry, not moulder! Begin, brothers! Unite! Stand together and stand fast!

(*Silence.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. I hear words, words, words! Workmen unite—ha! We are outlaws: they slammed the doors of Parliament in our faces. Votes are not for us. Votes are for the money-bags!

JIMMY. We are for more than votes. Our land for our workers! England is ruled by her great lords; no room for rabble in their house. They make robber wars and call them wars for King and country. But who bleeds for their country? Is it Mammon?

WEAVERS. No, ourselves, ourselves!

JIMMY. We are preparing for the fight. In London we have founded a League that shall embrace every workman in the kingdom. In many towns already the beacon fire of resolution burns. The commonwealth shall be our master, not Mammon! Men shall rule, not machinery!

ARTHUR. Men—men—shall rule—not—not—machinery!

JIMMY. Are you ready to lend your brothers your right arm?

WEAVERS. We are! We are!

JIMMY. The fight is hard and calls for patience, brothers. It will be harder than you guess. You must take service at the engine. You must bear the old load for many a day—you must see your wives and children hunger, and hear yourselves reproached and cursed!

WEAVERS. We are ready!

NED LUD. We choose you for our leader!

JIMMY. Each of you serves the people, each serves the cause. Each of you our leader!

WEAVERS. Each serves the people, each serves the cause!

(*They lift* JIMMY *on their shoulders and carry him out.* JOHN WIBLEY *remains alone.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. This vagabond Irishman carried shoulder high! In scarce an hour he robs me of the leadership. And these boobies would rule the earth and make it Paradise! They may believe in it. Not I!

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE I

A room in URE'S *house.* HENRY COBBETT *alone, then* JOHN WIBLEY.

HENRY. I sent for you. We'll make no mysteries with each other. You know the new agitator?

JOHN WIBLEY. Yes, Mr. Cobbett.

HENRY. You know his name?

JOHN WIBLEY. Jimmy Cobb——

HENRY. Well and good. They tell me you had words with him. A difference of opinion, eh?

JOHN WIBLEY. Not that I know of——

HENRY. None of your acting here! I know the part you play. Do you hear me? *I know the part you play*—every line of it. There was no need to send for you, Wibley. It would have been easier to have you fetched—in irons!

JOHN WIBLEY. You've got no proof——

HENRY. Come, we can save our breath in denials, both of us! We have too much to lose. Cards on the table, Wibley! My brother must leave Nottingham. Ure must not learn who the agitator is. I give you twenty-four hours to get rid of him. The time is short; the matter presses. You will be satisfied with your pay.

JOHN WIBLEY. Cards on the table. Then I—I agree.

HENRY. Arrange it as you please; that's your affair.

JOHN WIBLEY. The game would be bold——

HENRY. Have you a plan?

JOHN WIBLEY. To wreck the engine after all—quietly to let him know our plan—and then—then he would have to leave the town——

HENRY. Your own affair. I play no part in it—you understand?

JOHN WIBLEY. Can I speak to Mr. Ure?

HENRY. Is that necessary?

JOHN WIBLEY. Yes.

HENRY. Wait here.

(*He leaves the room.*)

JOHN WIBLEY (*alone*). Scum! Jack-in-office! Taskmaster, overseer, driver maybe, but not the leader of a herd of bellowing fools! This is an evening in a thousand. The door is opened.—Pray step in, Mr. Wibley.—Am I not cleverer than that toady Cobbett? Nature has given me the fawning hump.—Your most obedient servant, Mr. Ure. Just as you think fit, Mr. Ure.—I throw myself at your feet, good Mr.

Ure. We need lower wages, longer working hours? I'm entirely of your opinion, Mr. Ure.—But I'll make the cursed pack laugh the wrong side of their mouths, trust me for that! One milestone passed, but there are more to come.—Let me but put a cushion to my back, for it stands in need of fattening.

(URE *enters.*)

URE. John Wibley, weaver?

JOHN WIBLEY. Your servant, Mr. Ure.

URE. Out of work?

JOHN WIBLEY. I was twelve years a weaver in your factory, sir——

URE. I can take no account of individual claims. Industry is a national interest. We must all bow to its requirements, I as well as you.

JOHN WIBLEY. It's not work I'm after, Mr. Ure.

URE. What then?

JOHN WIBLEY. I came because—because it goes against the grain to see trouble made among the hands—because I have eaten my bread at your table these twelve years, Mr. Ure.

URE. Come to the point. What is happening?

JOHN WIBLEY. There's a plot, Mr. Ure,—a plot to destroy the engine.

URE. Take a seat, if you please. A cigar? Be good enough to give me all the details.

JOHN WIBLEY. An agitator from London has come to Nottingham. No one knows his name. A Communist. A member of the secret workers' league, and in the pay of France. He has been stirring up the weavers to destroy machinery. He promised them arms; said blood must flow.

URE. So there's a limit even you refuse to overstep. I'm glad of that, Wibley. The living blood of comradeship between master and man is no legend. I knew it. Labour makes us one.

JOHN WIBLEY. I will carry out your orders, Mr. Ure.

URE (*slowly*). H'm. There is little to say at the moment. An attack on the engine will not alarm me. Rather the contrary. At a time like the present the actual occurrence of such a crime might well strengthen our position. It would open the eyes of our go-as-you-please Government. The material loss would be made good by the prospect of an orderly and well-regulated future. H'm. You understand me? I wish to be informed of every development that takes place.

JOHN WIBLEY. Very good, Mr. Ure.

URE (*takes a sheet of paper and writes*). Give that to the cashier.

JOHN WIBLEY. Very good, Mr. Ure.

(URE'S *little daughter runs into the room, and clings to her father's knees.*)

URE. Yes, Wibley, they talk of a gulf between master and man. Fiddlesticks! Take a father's love, for instance. What difference is

there? When our children are sick we feel their pain as if it were our own. You as well as I. Good day to you, Wibley.

(URE *and the little girl go out.*)

JOHN WIBLEY (*alone*). Bloodsucker! The one famishes, the other starves him. Is that a difference? One child vomits in the lap of plenty, the other never sees white bread. Is that a difference? Scum, all of you, scum! And if you think, Master Ure, that I came creeping to your money-bags like a louse to your belly—bah! Call me a traitor! Fiddle-faddle! The ferret drives the polecat from the pigeon-loft. A change of tenants, nothing more. A traitor—ha! The word's a bogy fit to frighten children! A traitor? That depends on the result.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE II

A dirty street in front of JOHN WIBLEY'S *cottage. The houses are mostly one-storied.* JIMMY COBBETT *and* JOHN WIBLEY *meet.*)

JIMMY. Blacklegs are working in the factory.

JOHN WIBLEY. I know.

JIMMY. But that must stop.

JOHN WIBLEY. 'Twas you preached patience to the men. You counselled work at the machines. You are to treat with Ure to-day. Ask him to send his interlopers home!

JIMMY. You wonder why I am resolved to treat with Ure? I'll tell you. This is not the hour for the decisive fight. We must avoid it. If we are driven to fight to-day, defeat is certain, and our strength will be exhausted. The hour will come when England will be ready. Then, comrade, there will be an end of bargaining! But now, *because* we treat with Ure, no other men must work. We must place pickets at the factory gates.

JOHN WIBLEY. Better to set upon the blacklegs in the shed, and hunt them home like rats—those that are fit to run!

JIMMY. Why set upon them, when persuasion serves our end? They are workmen like ourselves. Blind and misled, but workmen.

JOHN WIBLEY. We must have deeds, not words!

JIMMY. Is every deed an altar where men's knees must bow? A senseless deed makes fools drunk and cowards brazen.

JOHN WIBLEY. We need defeat. Rebels are bred in misery. Give them their bellyful and they spit on your counsel and turn to wallow in the trough like full-fed sows.

JIMMY. Rebels are bred in misery. But let the misery grow until it clutches every throat—till all are roofless, homeless, famishing. Are they good rebels then? Ask them for comradeship and they will

scoff at you. Ask them to keep faith, and they will run to every trickster who lends the magic of words to their desires. Ask them for sacrifice, and they will be the hirelings and the prey of every leader who dangles the hope of booty before their greedy eyes.

JOHN WIBLEY. Hunt them from their lairs like wild beasts! Blood is the lash to whip them out of sloth!

JIMMY. With what contempt you speak of these workmen you would lead to freedom! What smouldering malice in your eyes! One would think you had no wish to free them, but only to revenge yourself! The man who arouses the baser instincts of the masses is overwhelmed by their fury. To-day he lets loose the storm, to-day he is a leader, to-morrow he is crushed by an avalanche of blind, mad passions, to-morrow he is a traitor spat upon by thousands!

JOHN WIBLEY. I've no book-learning, but we shall see who knows the workmen best. The working folk feel otherwise, think otherwise than you. . . . So we are to assemble at the factory-gate before the midday shift?

JIMMY. That would be best.

JOHN WIBLEY. There is no time to summon all the comrades for to-day.

JIMMY. It seems to me——

JOHN WIBLEY. Impossible. We must have time. I will summon all our friends to meet before the gate to-morrow night. Then we shall see how long the working folk will march with you.

(JOHN WIBLEY *goes.* OLD REAPER *comes out of the house.*)

OLD REAPER. Have you a minute to spare for me, Jimmy? These eighty years my life has lasted now—and it was none of the best, for all the toil and trouble. Old Reaper has no wish to rise again when he is buried. He would grow into the earth—English meadow earth—so that flowers take root in his lap, and sheep nibble at his grass, beside a spring that dances merrily as a young he-goat. But before they lay Old Reaper in the grave, let him ask you one thing: why this life, Jimmy? Where is the sense and purpose of it all?

JIMMY. Do you know why the tree grows, and puts out leaves that wither in the autumn? You ask for sense and purpose? I am, thou art, we are. That is the end of wisdom. Sense is given to life by men.

OLD REAPER. Do you believe in the kingdom of God? The Kingdom of Peace?

JIMMY. I fight as though I did.

OLD REAPER. Then tell me, where shall I find God?

JIMMY. I've never fallen in with Him. Maybe you'll find Him in yourself.

OLD REAPER. But aren't you fighting against God?

JIMMY. I fight as though I believed in Him.

OLD REAPER. He, he, he! The man's cracked! He fights against the engine, and doesn't know where God is! Your wits have gone a wool-gathering, Jim. You'll come to no good end.

(JIMMY *smiles and goes away. A* MAN *with a four-wheeled barrow comes along the street.*)

OLD REAPER. Hey! Man with the barrow, tell me, where shall I find God? I'll give you a hand with your barrow.

MAN WITH THE BARROW (*wrathfully*). I'm no man! I'm an official, I would have you know, and scavenger to the town of Nottingham. This is no barrow. A barrow has only two wheels. This is a four-wheeled cart. All my life I pushed a barrow. At last they've given me a cart. And now you call my cart a barrow!

OLD REAPER. It's not your barrow that we speak of, friend, but God.

MAN WITH THE BARROW. God doesn't bother me. Seek and you will find Him. We're talking of my cart you call a barrow. A barrow! A barrow, a barrow, he calls my four-wheeled cart.

OLD REAPER. I wanted to give you a hand with it.

MAN WITH THE BARROW. A fine helper indeed! A man who grudges another his advancement! Barrow, barrow, barrow! You'll call my cart an engine next!

OLD REAPER. The engine! But that's what I'm looking for! That's what I'm looking for!

(*The* MAN WITH THE BARROW *goes away. A* BLIND MAN, *led by a* DEAF AND DUMB MAN, *comes along the street.*)

Hey, brother blind man, where shall I find God?

BLIND MAN. I don't hear Him. Ask the man who leads me.

OLD REAPER. Hey, brother, tell me where shall I find God?

(*The* DEAF AND DUMB MAN *makes signs that he does not understand. The* BLIND MAN *laughs.*)

What are you cackling at?

BLIND MAN. He, ha! He's deaf and dumb and doesn't see Him!

OLD REAPER. The blind man can't hear Him, the deaf and dumb man can't see Him. I have two good eyes and ears, but can't find Him.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE III

A square in front of URE'S *house. A high wall encloses the garden. The main gate is in the middle and a little wicket at the side. Children pass.*

FIRST BOY. I've seen the engine!

FIRST GIRL. So have I!

SECOND BOY. And I!

FIRST BOY. All shining, just like gold!

SECOND GIRL. Perhaps 'twas God that sent it.

FIRST BOY. Stupid!

SECOND GIRL. But parson says the angels brought it down.

FIRST BOY. When you have played the blackleg for a day and night, then you may say "Thank you, kind God!"

SECOND BOY. The old loom is a miserable thing.

SECOND GIRL. I like the engine best.

THIRD BOY. Let's hide. If father sees me, I am for the loom.

FIRST BOY. We're out on strike. You needn't weave to-day.

THIRD BOY. Shall I tell you a secret? My father's working.

FIRST GIRL. And mine!

FIRST BOY. These men don't hold together—shame on them!

(*The children run off. A procession of ragged women comes along.*)

WOMEN. We want no engine! We want no engine!

(*Silence.*)

FIRST WOMAN. Silent as blocks of wood they sit. Their door would open sooner to a yelping cur. I had to sell my last stick from the house. A bed, to pay the grocer. In that bed slept son and prentice, grandad, husband and myself. Many's the night I haven't known which took me in his arms. Now that last stick is gone.

SECOND WOMAN. Hey, masters, hey! Give us an answer! We are no robbers come to steal your goods by night. We are beggars—only beggars!

(*Silence.* HENRY COBBETT *comes out of the house.*)

WOMEN. We want no engine! We want no engine!

HENRY. The engine stands and waits for you. Give up your senseless strike and you have bread to-morrow. I have cheap hands enough—and none of them are shirkers.

WOMEN. Will all of us be taken on again?

HENRY. I grieve to say most of the men must be paid off. But all your children will be taken on. Children of three and four years old as well. And nimble girls. Be sensible, you women! The work demands deft fingers and a delicate touch.

FIRST WOMAN. Sir, good sir, send the engine from the town. Your doves have grain, no roebuck starves. You feed the sparrows in the winter time, you build the sheep a fold. We are but men and women, sir, but have compassion, for Christ's sake. We cannot live if none but girls and women work. The devil tempted you, and sent you the machine. Sir, good sir, send the engine from the town!

WOMEN. Sir, good sir, send the engine from the town!

HENRY. We do our duty to our country. 'Tis true machinery displaces men, but only for a time. Why? I will tell you. We shall produce more goods in larger factories, at half the price. At half the price! Mark that, and listen. I will tell you what it means. To-day, for instance, you must pay four shillings to the parson for a burial. Six shillings more for a good plot of earth, say two yards long by one

yard wide. Now suppose there came a joyful day when parson asked two shillings only, and the plot of earth were sold for three! Would you not die the easier for the thought of three days' wages saved to those you left behind? Half a week's wages! As eagerly as you would jump into the cheaper grave, the buyers run to purchase cheaper goods. Next comes a broadening of business and increase of demand. Give us goods! shout our customers. Goods! whistle the sirens of the ships. Goods! rattle the waggons. Goods! Goods! Goods! The end is that the factories grow out-of-date. New factories, powerful factories, giant factories, spring up; their doors are opened to the hungry workers. There are not hungry men enough in England to feed those great factories—to cram their gaping jaws, to fill their eager throats. Be patient, women. Wait awhile! I would advise those men who find no work to-day to go back to the land. If we could change the world, good women, we would do it. But there are no markets for the moment. Since the Great War, all Europe has been crippled by a load of debt. You are Englishwomen, you are patriots, you must know we cannot lend to bankrupt debtors. Our credit is our life. Our country first!

(HENRY *goes back into the house. A silence of consternation.*)

LONG-DRAWN CRY OF THE WOMEN. Down with the machines! (*A silence.*) Down with the machines!

(MARY *comes stealthily out of the garden door. She pauses, startled, then makes as if to run away. Several women run to her and drag her forward. They speak in rapid succession.*)

MARGARET. Where have you been?

SECOND WOMAN. Playing our husbands false in Cobbett's bed.

THIRD WOMAN. Her nest's well feathered!

FOURTH WOMAN. So you would play the whore in masters' beds, while we stand here and beg—beg for a mouthful!

(SECOND WOMAN *rushes at* MARY.)

SECOND WOMAN. We'll tear out the pretty toy! We'll spoil her beauty for her!

FOURTH WOMAN. The whip! the whip for hussies!

FIFTH WOMAN. Tie her naked to a ladder! Let the children spit upon her face!

SECOND WOMAN (*with a laugh*). She likes it warm!

MARGARET. A workman was too rough, too common for her!

WOMEN (*beating* MARY). You strumpet! Brazen slut! You mattress-mopsy!

(NED LUD *comes.*)

NED LUD. John Wibley's wife? Are you wild beasts? Stand back! Why are you beating her?

FIRST WOMAN. You're welcome, Lud. The woman's rotten bad,
Worse than the creatures in the public stews.
We women starve. These seven weeks and more
Not one warm sup between us. We assemble,
We drag our swooning limbs to Cobbett's gate
And cry for riddance from machinery.

FOURTH WOMAN. Were you a woman, Ned Lud, you would know
How hard it goes to bear a child, and then
With folded arms to see it starve and die!
A mother's agony!

MARGARET. What man knows that!

FIRST WOMAN. Our misery, our pain, our aching care!

THIRD WOMAN. It seems to me Ure's wife should feel for us.

SECOND WOMAN. Ure's wife, ha, ha! When she's in need of help
They call the midwife. For a pound or so
The bubble's pricked.

MARGARET. This hireling Cobbett told us to our face
The engine stays in Nottingham. The men
And older women, most of them, must go.
He drove us from the door like outworn dogs
And lay with her, a workman's wife, whose man
He throws into the gutter!

(*The women crowd in on* MARY.)

WOMEN. Beat the whore!

NED LUD (*pushing them back*). What, beat a child for pouncing on a crust?
We are all famished. Mary, why were you there?

MARY (*in a low voice*). I am—so poor—I am like all the rest.
'Tis true I did it—but not for myself.

NED LUD. You fell upon this woman like wild cats.
Think with your heads for once, not with your bowels!
Had you her looks, you all would do as much.
You all have done it, too, when you were young.
Come, Mary, they'll not harm you. This way home.
(*To the* FIRST WOMAN.) Come to me when your senses have return'd.

(NED LUD *and* MARY *go off.*)

SECOND WOMAN. The devil take her!

CRIES. Death to the engine! Down with the thieving shopkeepers! Blood or bread! Death to the engine!

(*The women form a procession and go off singing.*)

SONG

Down, down, down and down,
Pauper and drudge and slave!
From moor and meadow, street and loom,
From sty and dunghill, hutch and tomb,
Hark to the thunder call of doom,
Work or the grave!

(*During the scene* OLD REAPER *has come.*)

OLD REAPER. They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels; because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity. If I were He, I would let manna fall from heaven. But He makes no sign. When will He stir? When trumpets blow and golden harps greet kings and conquerors? The poor have no such music. Their moan is softer than the heart-beat of a child. You must have good ears to hear it. You must listen close to unwashed bosoms, stinking bosoms to hear it. I will cheer the womenfolk a little.

(OLD REAPER *takes a stick, and makes as if to play a violin. Two women pass.*)

FIRST WOMAN. Look at the cracked old man!

OLD REAPER (*as if speaking to many dancing women*). What, are you blown already? I've played three steps, no more. What do you say? You have no legs for dancing? You can scarcely stand? You are to dance and you can—scarcely—stand? Aye, aye, to be sure. Aye, aye, to be sure.

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

Scene I

A room in Ure's *house.* Henry Cobbett *is writing at a high desk. Muffled sounds are heard from the Factory, and sirens whistle. Enter* Jimmy Cobbett.

Henry. You here? What do you want? Out of here this minute! Our porters carry dog-whips. The police know how to deal with ragged tramps. And the King's soldiers have a bullet in their pouch or a halter in their knapsack for the rebel!

Jimmy. Tell Mr. Ure I want to see him, brother.

Henry. Brother? I know of no brother.

Jimmy. Then tell him that a stranger waits.

Henry. No!

Jimmy. Mr. Ure's door is never closed to callers on important business. Am I to ask the servants to announce me?

Henry. If you possess a spark of brotherly feeling, go! Leave Nottingham. England is wide. You will find dupes enough. Why must you be revenged on me? I used to beat you long ago when we were boys. Well—I was wrong.

Jimmy. So conscience stirs when your position is in danger?

Henry. Oh, this is infamous! You have come back to wreak your spite on me!

Jimmy. One bosom gave us life. My word upon it, Henry, Ure will never hear my name or know whose brother speaks to him. And that you may sleep in peace o' nights, I promise you this as well. One week more, or two at most, I stay in Nottingham. Farewell, brother. Greet the old woman from me—say I know how hard it was for her——

Henry. Here, take money. My month's salary. Go to-day—go now—this hour!

Jimmy. An English mother bore me. She taught me English speech. The horn-book where you learned the A B C of men is strange to me. Show me in, Henry. (*The other hesitates.*) Or must I knock?

Henry. Good God, I'm ruined! If I lose my place, and mother starves, the curses of her dying hour be on your head!

(*He goes.*)

Jimmy (*alone*). And are *one* blood!

(Ure *enters.*)

URE. Your name?

JIMMY. Call me Nameless. Or call me, if you will, the Full-timer, as you call your workmen full-timers or half-timers, when they man the looms as your submissive stock-in-trade.

URE. Your tone is impudent. I have no time for trifling. What do you want with me? On principle I never give to beggars. Try the vicar, my good man.

JIMMY. I may not be unknown to you. They call me the outlandish rebel who has taught the folk of Nottingham that workmen can be men.

URE. You dare?

JIMMY. I dare. The spirit owns no slavery,
No bondage to the masters of this earth.
The mind's eternal law, in adamant
Chisell'd upon the welkin of mankind,
Commands that men keep faith with what they know.
The coward who quits his Thought betrays himself.
I speak for thousands deaden'd by a yoke
Of dull oppression—seeking for the word
That shall translate the heart-beat of their soul.
I say to you that no man has the right
To rob another of that scanty bread
Without which he must wither like mown grass.
You cry aloud that work alone can save us,
And turn your practis'd craftsmen out of doors!
While countless women lack a cotton shift
To cover them, you leave the bales to rot,
Dismiss your weavers, and abuse your power
To grind a niggard wage to nothingness.
Out of the cruel fountain-head of war
Still runs the heart-blood of a continent.
Want cries aloud in prisons of despair.
Here men go hungry, there the granaries
Are choked with mildew'd corn. Here is no coal,
The people freeze, and there, above the pits,
The coal stands mountain-high. If the demand
Is lacking, ask yourselves the reason why;
Yours is the system that will have it so.
The market's at a standstill? Trade is bad?
You leave the masses scarce a pauper's dole
And whimper "Trade is bad."
O, you are blind, and for your blindness' sake
It is our task to see this world aright.
Give work to workers! Thousands will have bread
If you but shorten hours. Consider well
Before you crush with wanton heel the lives
That, like your own, were pressed into this world
To march along the road of nameless fate

And meet their doom. 'Tis God who perishes
When you destroy a brother's livelihood.

URE. Who are you, sir?
Your dress bespeaks no quality of mind.
God and our business have no truck together.
God is the shield of lonely, silent men,
To Whom they look for succour in distress.
God is too good for daily bargainings
And earthly cares. God is the Lamp of truth,
The Light of mercy sh...ing far above
All human need. We should profane His goodness
Were we to banish Him to household tasks.
What would you have? Our town was peaceable
Until you came. You threw the torch of anger
Into a witless flock of brutish men
Whom the State shepherds into quietude
With patient toil. What is your purpose, Sir?
Ruin? Are you an enemy of peace
Who never rests until revolt and bloodshed
Like a volcano pour their lava streams
On towns and villages, to set ablaze
The scaffolding of diligent endeavour?

JIMMY. Your hands they were that threw the torch of war
Into our marching ranks. 'Tis you who tear
The stragglers from the body of mankind,
So that they stand forlorn and may not look
Their brothers in the face, unless in hatred.
You make our earth an endless battlefield
Where strong men crush the weak, and artful men
Outwit the simple—where the dastard hires
A cut-throat for his bidding, where the dupes
Lie buried and the bloodstain'd conquerors
Are counted heroes.

URE. Young man, the dreams you dream are dangerous.
You walk this earth as blind men walk. Life grows
To manhood in the universal fray.
The stag supplants the rival at his hip
And sires a lusty race of antler'd kings.
The conqueror breeds his kind, and not the weakling!
The harmony of freedom takes its root
On the grim battlefield of interest.
He who survives, survives by Nature's law
Which must remain unfathom'd by our minds.
'Tis thus we ripen, thus we civilize.

JIMMY. Oh, let a foe molest the weaker stag
And you will see the stronger take his stand
Beside his brother, lending him his power!
You speak of freedom and of interest,

Of battles fought and won, of master-men
Who live as conquerors by Nature's law.
Freedom for all! you cry. What freedom has
The weaver in your service? He is free
To die, maybe, but not to live and labour.
How prosperous was once the lot of slaves!
Their lord was their protector, foster-father,
They were not left to freeze in pitiless streets!
How enviable was the lot of guildsmen
Who fashioned tower on tower by noble toil
In unison with their masters! And to-day?
Free men, we drag in chains a load of want
That throttles every vein of manly blood.
What are we? Wares! A Thing! A hated, hateful
Thing! From the wells of life as far removed
As that old loom from your great engine-shed!
Aye, look to Nature's law. Where lives the brute
That lives alone? The eagle soaring calmly
Espies his head of game. He gives a cry
To warn his neighbour eagles, and together
They swoop upon the field to share the prize.
The full-fed ant will vomit up his meal
To feed the hungry of the common clan.
The sexton-beetle calls the neighbours in
To burrow him a house for his unborn.
The negroes live in cheerful comradeship
With fellows of their tribe; where all are one
In blood, there all are bound in brotherhood.
None but free men of cultur'd lands are deaf
When THOU, and WE, and ONE ANOTHER call.

URE. 'Tis plain your words are felt. And you and I
Stand on that field where strong men's pride compels
The battle. There's the law we speak of.

JIMMY. Let me but name that natural law again.
Your law of Nature is the law of money!
Money lends mastery to the man who gives
Another work. Not mind, not rank, but money!
Your conquerors are not chosen, but impress'd,
Not garlanded, but coin'd! And you, the lords
Of money, sink to be its patient drudge!
Money is master! Money bids you crush
The Indian peoples, children of the Spring.
And money bids you spread destruction wide
Through Eastern wonderlands, with devil's brews
Of opium and brandy. Money bids you burn
The garner'd store of riper lands for gain.
O, what you name a virtue, Nature's law,
The strong man's birthright, is your deepest shame,

The bond of self-made slavery, the badge
Of an insatiate demon, urging you
From war to war!
To wars against your brothers of one blood,
To wars of nations, races, continents.
The universal fray indeed, a war
Against YOURSELVES!

URE. And you?

JIMMY. Within our breast there is a bud
That longs to be unfolded, hiding wonder
On wonder in its petals. It is THOU!
That THOU can lift the Scriptural curse of toil,
And what is now our scourge, our brand of bondage
Shall be again our holy, happy task!

(*A silence.*)

URE. You dream. Yet I would have you dream beside me.
Henceforward you are welcome to my house.

JIMMY. Not so. Will you give work to workers, Sir?

URE (*resuming the official tone*). We must return to business, since you wish it. The terms of work are known; I have no more to add to them. They have been well considered. Expediency, not sympathy, must be our guide in these affairs.

JIMMY. We fight against you, and yet on your side.
For you, your child, and all your children's children,
The light of justice flames upon our banner!

(JIMMY *goes.*)

URE (*alone*). A fool. A strange fool. A sanguine fool. A dangerous fool. A man!

(HENRY *enters.*)

HENRY. Sir?

URE. A man was here! (*Recollecting himself.*) He must be watched, and sharply! Tell the police to keep an eye upon him. Have you made all arrangements for the manning of the engine?

HENRY. The last batch of hands has just arrived from Carlton.

URE. You may go.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE II

NED LUD'S *cellar, furnished with a table and stools. In the background is a heap of straw on which children lie.* MARGARET *and* NED LUD *sit at the table.* MARGARET *holds the youngest child in her arms, and sings a lullaby.*

MARGARET. Hey, poppy, hey, poppy, moon, mine,
Our good Lord will be here for you soon, mine,
Pack you in a golden chest, O,
Lay you in the grave to rest, O,
Earth on you,
Earth on me,
Hand in hand we knock at Heaven's gate,
Hand in hand we knock at Heaven's gate.

(*She lays the child in the straw, and returns to the table.*)

What, the cash-box here? The hidden money? Not in my house, if you please!

NED LUD. My wife a swab! Leave me some comfort, Mag.

MARGARET. You are the same old fool as ever. Let John Wibley keep the money.

NED LUD. Are you afraid they'll rummage in our cellar?

MARGARET. I have nine children.

NED LUD. So have I, Mag. So have I.

MARGARET. Look at them. See the youngest boy. When I have bedded him in lousy straw, then—God forgive me—I could wish I'd laid him in the grave.

NED LUD. He was born ailing.

MARGARET. Is that my fault? Till the last hour of labour I was standing at the loom. And then—what then? After three days the foreman sent to ask if I should be at work next morning. What could I do? At half-past four next morning I was in the stifling mill. Wet weaving—linen-yarn it was. All day the milk was running from my breasts. And how they smarted! When I left the factory that night at nine, my clothes were clinging to me from the milk. I was too tired to eat a crust. 'Twas three o'clock before I came to bed.

NED LUD. Now, Mag, who's blaming you?

MARGARET. The blame . . . the blame . . . I think they crucify Christ every day. God asks the murderers before His throne: Where is thy brother Abel? When will He ask our masters for a reckoning of men they starved, women and little ones they left to die? God-fearing gentry that they call themselves—they eat and drink, go whoring, eat and drink again. Their bellies are our burden—pah!

NED LUD. An end will come of it, I say.

MARGARET. All brag!

NED LUD. I am an English workman, and don't lie.

MARGARET. Workmen are soldiers, gaolers, hangmen—workmen all! 'Tis workmen build their gallows for them. Pah! Your eyes are guns. Well, fire away! I'm not afraid. This cash-box. Is it the money of the secret league?

NED LUD. So you would have me blab?

MARGARET. You tell me not a word, although I am your wife. I'm good for bed, maybe. Or good to mind the brats.

NED LUD (*embracing her*). Well, there's a shrew! A workman's wife, and wants her man to let his tongue run loose.

MARGARET (*going*). Nine children are enough. Mark that!

(NED LUD *alone. Then* YOUNG LUD *enters, drunk, and arm-in-arm with a* STREET-WALKER.)

YOUNG LUD (*singing*). A bed of moss, a bed of straw,
A bed for kings, a bed——

NED LUD. What's that?

YOUNG LUD. 'Evening to you, dad. My bride is brought to bed—ha, ha—I've brought my bride to——

NED LUD. Pack up!

YOUNG LUD. We will—into the straw. And close, I promise you.

NED LUD. Take that baggage out of here, I say!

YOUNG LUD. Would you insult my bride?

NED LUD. Be off, I say, or I'll lay hands on you!

YOUNG LUD. Oho, dad, that's your tune? And who's the bread-winner? Tell me that! How long have I been working for you at the mill? Since four years old! And who cared what became of me? Did you? Or mother? Who kept you from the streets, these many months? I did. And now you want to spoil an evening's sport.

NED LUD. Out, I say! Aren't you ashamed to look your mother in the face?

YOUNG LUD. Mother! Oho! She knew a thing or two when she was young. Like my bride here. Well, keep your straw! the woods will serve as well. But I give notice, dad; I mean to quit. No penny-piece do you get from me, from this day forward. So good-bye, old blockhead. (*Singing.*) A bed of straw, a bed of moss. . . .

(YOUNG LUD *and his companion stagger out.* NED LUD *sits down with his head in his hands. Enter* JOHN WIBLEY.)

NED LUD. You're welcome, John.

JOHN WIBLEY. Now there's a man who feels for working folk! Ned, you brought Mary home to-day. You brought—Mary—home.

NED LUD. Let be, John. Say no more. I am no parson. I know what poverty means.

JOHN WIBLEY. Their pleasure shall be paid for—yes, in bloody tears!

NED LUD. Our women have been plundering the bakers' shops.

JOHN WIBLEY. They have done well. Did you see Ure?

NED LUD. This morning.

JOHN WIBLEY. Well, what news?

NED LUD. None of the best.

JOHN WIBLEY. Will all of us be taken on again?

NED LUD. Seventy-five in every hundred men must go. And no more ailing women will be wanted. All the children will be taken on. We asked what workless men should do. Well, well, said Mr. Ure, there was a hope, if trade looked up, of building bigger factories.

Meanwhile the men had time to think of the next world. And he went on to say machinery called for suppleness, not strength. Our hands, he said, were too big-boned, too hard about the knuckle-joints, too stiff and heavy to be suited to the engine.

JOHN WIBLEY. Good, good. We are to think of our immortal souls. And rub our hands with oil, maybe, to make them supple. A fine plan indeed! What wages does he offer?

NED LUD. Fivepence for children. Eightpence for women, and a shilling for the men.

JOHN WIBLEY. And the conditions?

NED LUD. They are hard, John. We must bind ourselves for one year's service. Ure can dismiss a weaver on the nod for scanty work or breach of regulations. If we break spool or shuttle, brush or can, we have to pay for them. And the fines! They're bigger than the wage. A penny for forgetting scissors. Threepence for quitting place at the machine. Fivepence for going out without permission of the foreman. Fourpence for talking to your neighbour, singing, whistling. We must live in Ure's cottages, and take his goods for half our earnings.

JOHN WIBLEY. Good, good. He makes us pay our wages back again in fines and rents. And what does Jimmy say to that?

NED LUD. Jimmy's advice is to agree. He says the master's days are numbered. In Blackburn, Bolton, Rochdale, Wigan, Derby, Manchester, the weavers are preparing. He says we must put off the fight till every town is ready.

(*A crowd of women presses in, among them* MARGARET. *The* FIRST WOMAN *throws loaves to the children out of her apron.*)

MARGARET. Here, children, fill your bellies. Seven lean years will come.

(*The children fall greedily on the bread.*)

NED LUD. Bread from the plundered shops! I won't allow it!

MARGARET. Ha, ha, he won't allow it! I could die of laughing! He won't allow it! The gentleman! The saint! Like chained-up dogs that fall upon a bone, your children gnaw their stolen crust. Well, take it from them, Ned! Now show your mettle. Take it from them—the stolen loaves—the bread of wickedness—ha, ha! What, tears! The man is crying. What do I see? The great Ned Lud, the man of iron, in tears!

(*Silence.*)

SECOND WOMAN. Is it true you counsel working at the engine?

NED LUD. It's true.

FIRST WOMAN. And that the men are bargaining with Ure?

NED LUD. We must have justice done to all. The engine's not our enemy.

FIRST WOMAN. What does that mean?

SECOND WOMAN. Can't you see? They leave us in the lurch.

JOHN WIBLEY. If you must have it so. We leave you in the lurch.

FIRST WOMAN. Ha, ha! And what of justice? We're for justice, too. And we'll not work for engines. Never, never!

JOHN WIBLEY. You must do it, for our sakes.

MARGARET. John Wibley! Wibley snivelling like a parson! Have none of you got marrow in your bones?

FIRST WOMAN. You hamstrung shufflers! Who would sleep a night with you?

NED LUD. Why do you rage? You women will be taken on. Ours is the hardest lot.

FIRST WOMAN. Oh, you can sweep the rooms, and cook the dinner, darn the socks. A noble trade for men!

NED LUD. And if you snap your fingers at Ure's terms, your children starve!

MARGARET. Then let them starve! I would they were unborn. Shall we have time for children now? Scarce time enough to suckle them. They'll grow up like a cuckoo-brood. We'll have to farm them out. Family! Mother-love! O, they do well to talk, our masters! What have our like to do with home and family? The weaving-stool is more to me than my own child. What do I know of children? That they cry for food!

FIRST WOMAN. Get our husbands bread, we say! Else we, the wives, will make a league against you!

JOHN WIBLEY. What would you do?

FIRST WOMAN. What would we do? Why, go to Ure and beg him to take women on in place of the remaining men. Try us and see. We have the hands for weaving. We can work for twenty hours a day, if need be. And for half your wages.

NED LUD. For shame! Would you betray your brothers and your trade?

FIRST WOMAN. Our trade—ha, ha! When our children eat the grass of poverty, are we to sing them lullabies of trade and brothers? Good brothers, save us!

SECOND WOMAN. We must have deeds.

NED LUD. Hear what Jimmy says: Jimmy means well by us. He speaks our mind; he tells us what we feel. Here, John, I am no talker, as you know. Tell them what Jimmy said to us.

JOHN WIBLEY. From boyhood's days I always fell asleep at sermon-time. 'Twas so with me last night. I'll not compare old parson's discourse with the sermon Jimmy gave us. But I woke when all was over.

SECOND WOMAN. We are no men, to hang upon the lips of vagabond preachers!

FIRST WOMAN. We give you two days' grace, you flabby-guts!

(*The women go.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. But Jimmy says we must submit.

NED LUD. Only no treachery! We must stand united. Else we

are blades that bend to every breeze. Our strength is in the mass.

JOHN WIBLEY. Do you know that Ure has brought two hundred unemployed from Carlton? They're working in the factory.

NED LUD. The scabs!

JOHN WIBLEY. I spoke with Jimmy on the matter.

NED LUD. And what did he advise?

JOHN WIBLEY. Patience.

NED LUD. Patience! That can't be!

JOHN WIBLEY. Jimmy knows nothing of a workman's pride. He is no workman, though he takes our part. Why, he can read and write like gentlefolks!

NED LUD. We must defend ourselves!

JOHN WIBLEY. Aye, so say all the rest. To-night we gather by the smaller shed. We'll notch a score or two of black sheep, never fear!

NED LUD. To-night, you say?

JOHN WIBLEY. At nine o'clock.

NED LUD. I shall be there.

JOHN WIBLEY. Whatever Jimmy says?

NED LUD. My name's Ned Lud. Are all the comrades warned?

JOHN WIBLEY. All except Bobby. I must see him now. (*At the door.*) I met one of Ure's book-keepers. He told me Jimmy's always in and out there. He even said 'twas Jimmy counselled Ure to bring the men from Carlton. But that I don't believe.

(JOHN WIBLEY *goes out.* NED LUD *and* MARGARET *remain. A silence.*)

MARGARET. It seems a spell is on us, since the engine came to town. But there was sense in what the women said.

NED LUD (*angrily*). Margaret!

MARGARET. Flabby-guts you are! You pray with pious faces while your womenfolk and children perish. Ned Lud will empty slops. I'll give you an old petticoat. Here, pull it on and grin!

(*A child's cry is heard. She runs to the straw.*)

The babe! The babe! O, God in Heaven, my babe is in a fit! He's dead!

NED LUD. Stock still we stand, while heavy things spin round us. There's the machine—and there—and there—— How clear all seemed while Jimmy spoke! And now—— Back to the soil were best for us. The city runs like poison in our veins. Townsmen break faith. We must have earth again. So we should have a homeland. We are like the lepers. Like trees whose roots are cut. They stand against the storm, and yet they wither.

CURTAIN

ACT FIVE

Scene I

A street in Nottingham, at dusk. The shapes of the houses are blurred. The scene passes like a ghostly flicker.

John Wibley. In two hours' time. Why do you start?

Albert (*with a shiver*). The engine!

John Wibley. Jimmy is in the master's pay.

Albert. It was the engine bought him!

John Wibley. Albert, what if we did more than hunt the blacklegs out? What if we took up the fight against our enemy, the engine?

Albert. That would save us! That would save us!

John Wibley. You're with us, then?

Albert. To the last drop of blood. But Jimmy's cast a spell upon the men.

John Wibley. Ha, ha! Fine words that warmed their cockles for a night! Already they are muttering at Ure's terms. Already they are asking whether Jimmy's hands are clean. Already they are whispering tales of snares and pitfalls. Let them but look the engine in the face, and Jimmy's counsel will be blown away like chaff! The women do their part. See to the women, Albert; ply them well! Jimmy will not be in the mill to-night. He thinks we meet to-morrow.

Albert. The women, first to shout and first to run! But Ned Lud's different. I'd a dog once that set his teeth in a goat's neck. I had to beat him dead before he loosed his hold. Ned Lud is such a man.

John Wibley. Do you know Henry Cobbett is Jimmy's brother?

Albert. You told me that. But Jimmy has no truck with home.

John Wibley. No matter. We shall gain Ned Lud. And if Ned Lud stands in with us, then, Jimmy, watch yourself!

Albert (*crying out*). O God!

John Wibley. What's to do?

Albert (*terror-struck*). There's some one near us listening. The engine's near us!

John Wibley. You give a man the creeps. Befriend me, night! We shall win through.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

Scene II

An old potato shed, with straw on the floor. Jimmy *sits on the straw, writing. The* Beggar *comes in.*

Beggar. So you are there?

Jimmy. Why, are they looking for me?

Beggar. No, friend. Just the other way about.

Jimmy. The other way about?

Beggar. The seekers have gone dancing.

Jimmy. None of your riddles!

Beggar. What are you doing there?

Jimmy. Writing a pamphlet.

Beggar. Pamphlets—drifting sand. They stop the eyes and ears, but go no deeper. Say, friend, are you sure of your men?

Jimmy. They are working men.

Beggar. No less men for that.

Jimmy. Working men keep faith.

Beggar. Some of them, maybe. But all? There's a question. Do all men keep their word, are all men brave and true? No. Then why working men? Because they work? Look at them as they are, and not as you would have them be. These are your new gods, called "holy workmen." True gods, pure gods, wise gods, perfect gods—English weavers of 1815. Aye, so you dream. My friend, the man who fights with gods for comrades will ride to victory as surely as an apple-blossom comes to fruit. Open your eyes and see that they are only men, good and bad, greedy and generous, petty and great-hearted—and yet try your luck with them. If you win through and they change their nature in the fight, I take off my hat to you. Always providing that I have a hat. For yours is gone. It was drowned. It lies in a warm place. If you refuse to see men as they are, never speak to me of treachery or ingratitude.

Jimmy. The workers fight for justice.

Beggar. I have lived under three governments. All governments cheat the people, some more, others less. Those that cheat them least are called good governments.

Jimmy. You're a Jeremiah.

Beggar. Jimmy, you're an educated workman. That means an aristocrat. All aristocrats have the itch to rule. And workmen, too, have their aristocrats. Now don't jump down my throat, friend. For if you have the itch to rule, you may be one of those who do it well. Aye, very well.

Jimmy (*laughs. After a silence*). Do you know John Wibley?

Beggar. Wibley with the hump?

Jimmy. John Wibley.

Beggar. His father drank me under the table. And that's no small matter. When he came home drunk he used to beat his wife and children. One night he threw John against the wall as you might

throw a cat. The boy lay where he fell. When he came to his feet he was a cripple. The mother hanged herself because she had stolen a loaf from the baker's, and stood in fear of being jailed. The baker said she took three loaves, but we know the bakers. They say they bake rye bread, but the rye often stinks of powdered alum.

JIMMY. Do the weavers look up to John Wibley?

BEGGAR. He can be masterful.

JIMMY. What does that mean?

BEGGAR. O, he can rule the roost, has a good pair of jaws, and threw a stone once at the manager's back—but that was after dark.

JIMMY. And is his boy a cripple?

BEGGAR. No more than other weavers' children. The midwives say they hardly know whether the new-born babes have bones. They feel like rubber.

JIMMY. If we could but save the children! This future generation eaten to the marrow!

(*A silence.*)

BEGGAR. And you would lead men! Let me laugh! Run to the vicar; get him to make you colonel of a regiment of angels! This man would lead others, and can't see what is happening under his nose!

JIMMY. What is happening?

BEGGAR. Why, man, the mares are calving, the rose-bushes are sprouting lilies, and men and women crying "Halleluja, our new prophet!"

JIMMY. What does that mean?

BEGGAR. Halleluja, new prophet!

JIMMY. Answer me!

BEGGAR. Halleluja, new prophet! (*He sets a plaited wreath of straw on* JIMMY'S *head.*) All hail!

JIMMY. Away with your trash!

BEGGAR (*suddenly*). Hush! Do you hear?

JIMMY. I hear nothing.

BEGGAR. Put your head in the straw and listen.

JIMMY. I hear a rustling.

BEGGAR. Hush!

JIMMY. Yes, it rustles.

BEGGAR. Man, you sit on a volcano and say "It rustles." It crashes! It thunders! It flashes fire, it blazes brimstone, it bubbles murder. Says the great leader, "It rustles."

JIMMY. Are you crazed?

BEGGAR (*imitating the sound of marching men*). Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

JIMMY. A drop too much.

BEGGAR. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp!

JIMMY. The taverns should be closed——

BEGGAR. And babes in arms should not be breeched too soon——

JIMMY. Or dotards given a rattle——

BEGGAR. To whimper over the ingratitude of men.

JIMMY. You're hiding something from me?

BEGGAR. So you're awake at last! Up with you, Jimmy! To-night your workmen smash the engine.

JIMMY. You lie!

BEGGAR. John Wibley is their leader.

JIMMY. It is false!

BEGGAR. Be off with you to London, man from cloud-land, before they do to you what they are doing to King Steam!

JIMMY. Where—where shall I find them?

BEGGAR. Why, at his Court.

JIMMY. Farewell——

BEGGAR (*calling after him*). Take care, my friend; take care! If they lose belief in you, they'll hang you. If they feel they're in the wrong, they'll hang you first. You've forgotten your crown, Jimmy! And your shirt too! May I keep it? He's out of hearing. These men who would conquer the world, with gods to help them! I'll take the shirt for luck. It's two years since I wore one. The man who wears a shirt feels a lord. But the man who wears none, and has a pint of liquor in him, feels a king. I'll have no truck with lordship when a kingdom beckons. Sir innkeeper, I confer this shirt upon thee, and make thee my cupbearer. Why, even a lord would scratch himself, if he lived in this palace.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE III

The factory by moonlight, with a gigantic steam-engine and mechanical looms, at which children and a few women are seated. Beside the engine are two men. Amid the sounds of machinery are heard the hum of the transmitters, the clear tone of the running crank-shafts, the deep rumble of the levers, and the regular whirr and rattle of the shuttles. Stokers tend the furnace.

HENRY (*as Overseer*). Nine o'clock gone! All hands to work! (*To a little girl.*) You there! Do you hear me?

LITTLE GIRL. I can never sleep in daytime, sir—and now I can scarcely keep my eyes open——

(HENRY *strikes her with a strap. She seats herself and goes on with her work. A boy comes in.*)

HENRY. Two minutes past the hour. Two minutes late for work. There's twopence off your earnings. Set about it! (*Boy goes to his place. A pause.*) Doors closed! (*A woman shuts the door. Knocking.*) Who's there?

VOICE. Mary Anne Walkley.

HENRY. Twelve minutes past the hour, by factory time. The doors are closed at ten past. You wait until the next shift starts at one o'clock. It will be entered in your punishment book. You lose half a day's wages.

VOICE. O, sir, I was unwell to-day——

HENRY. That's no concern of mine. The regulations are my business. Paragraph One of standing orders! (*Steps are heard going away; then fresh knocking.*) Who's there?

VOICE. Ure!

HENRY (*obsequious*). Very good, sir. Directly, sir.

(*He opens.* URE *enters with his* GUEST, *a Government representative.*)

URE. All in order?

HENRY. Quite in order, sir.

URE. Are all the hands full-timers?

HENRY. Yes, sir. All of them, sir.

URE (*to his* GUEST). Here you see the factory. Agents of our foreign rivals nickname it "the house of dread" or "the shambles"; but agitators love strong language. It's true machinery disciplines the rebel hand; for that we may be grateful. . . . Look at the children, my dear sir. Do you see any signs of weariness, ill-usage, discontent? How their eyes sparkle! How they enjoy the light play of their muscles! How they revel in the natural suppleness of youth! Ah, they have life before them! How charming the nimble movement with which this little girl ties up a broken thread! How all of them rejoice to show their skill before my guest! An artist's satisfaction, is it not?

GUEST. And yet one hears it said that children's wages are too low.

URE. The claptrap of the theorists, my dear sir. Wages *must* be low. Low wages are the manufacturer's only defence against the parent's greed. Believe me, they would send their sucklings to the mill if we would let them. There are no greater sharks than working parents. They batten on their children's health and strength.

GUEST. But are not night-shifts harmful to the children's health?

URE. Not in the least. Besides, we have no choice; the competition is too keen. If we dispensed with night-shifts the mills would soon be altogether idle.

GUEST. Parliament proposes to limit child labour to thirteen hours a day.

URE. Parliament, my dear sir, Parliament! Such legislation means an end to freedom. We must allow the worker liberty to choose his hours.

GUEST. And have the children intervals for meals?

URE. To our sincere regret we are unable to make this concession. The furnaces, you see, have to be stoked continually. The waste of coal would be criminal.

GUEST. And is the overseer an ex-workman?

URE. Yes, an ex-workman. We must make way for the man with

brains, provided he is honest, obedient, hard-working, sound in wind and limb. We have always found that ex-workmen give the best results as overseers. They soon throw off all relationship to their former fellows. They are assimilated, so to speak. We find them reliable and unyielding in their strictness—the very best of servants.

GUEST. An uplifting reflection. And when do you think this foolish strike will be abandoned?

URE. The end may come at any moment. We have hands enough at our disposal—unemployed weavers from Carlton and orphan children from the poorhouse, who are used to the machine. But a senseless spirit of rebellion is abroad among our lower orders. The dangerous, romantic moonshine of English liberalism, fostered by vain and workshy scribblers. We want to do our best for all our hands. They too are Christians. That is not to be forgotten. We are but human. And our reward? Our reward is ingratitude, my dear sir. Come!

(URE *and his* GUEST *leave the factory.*)

HENRY. Get on with your work, and quit staring! (*To a boy.*) You whistled something. What's your tune?

BOY. Britons never shall be slaves.

HENRY. Your name goes down in the punishment book. A penny fine. What do I see? Hey!

(*He goes to a stool where a little girl has fallen asleep, huddled up.*)

This sinful world! The creature goes to sleep at work! Hey!

(*He shakes her roughly. The girl wakes with a start and goes on weaving mechanically. Loud knocking at the door.*)

THE ENGINEER (*outside*). Open, open! (*He is admitted.*) A mob of weavers armed with picks and shovels—at the factory gate——

HENRY. All keep your places at the loom! (*To a child.*) Run to the Town Hall, you.

(*The child slips out. The shouts of the mob are heard as they approach. Knocking, then banging, on the door.*)

CRIES. Open! Open!

(*The door is forced. Among the mob who break into the shed are* NED LUD, JOHN WIBLEY, CHARLES, GEORGE, EDWARD, ALBERT, ARTHUR.)

CRIES. Scabs, all of you! To hell with blacklegs! Down with the Judas overseer!

(*The women and children from the looms shrink away into a corner.*)

CRIES. Why, they're children!

ALL. Children!

A CRY. Look at the iron man!

(*The mob see the engine. They are overwhelmed by wonder and stand transfixed. There is a sudden silence.*)

NED LUD. So grind the mills of God, maybe!
HENRY. Engineer! Engineer! Good God, my place is lost!
ENGINEER. Stop working! Shut off steam!

(*The engine stops. He leaps on to the bridge.*)

What would you do,
You simpletons? Fly out at Providence?
You trod the looms like galley-slaves, with limbs
Bent crooked by the load of drudgery.
The engine's your salvation! Even now
The boiler quivers on the glowing coals,
Pregnant with steam! One touch is all it needs!
The engine quickens! Energy is born!

(*He pulls a lever. With a sound like a human sigh the machinery begins to work.*)

The fly-wheels waken, stretch themselves,
Whirl in a humming melody!
The sliding pulleys tug their belts.
One touch! the frame of yarn is warp'd,
Another, and the weft is thrown!
No felting now with weary hands,
The shuttles fly to work, and set
The bobbins reeling fast. One touch,
The engine's tamed! It comes to rest.

(*He stops the machinery.*)

Maker and master is the Mind
Of man. Maker and master!
Who fights against machinery
Is godlike Reason's enemy!
The Demon Steam is overthrown
By right of numbers, and the power
Pluck'd from the tyrant's throne is made
Obedient to his former subjects!
Once you were slaves to elements
But now their masters, royal masters!
And in Creation's last high hour
The bow of freedom spans the sky,
Your arch of promise. Man becomes
The captain of his earth!

(JOHN WIBLEY *leaps on to a bench.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. You stare like men benumb'd, or turn'd to stone,
Look on that spawn of hell, and pay no heed
To Master Understrapper. Have you all forgot
What Albert said to you?

CHARLES. The engine binds us fast!
GEORGE. It hews our living body into pieces!
EDWARD. We were free men!
WILLIAM. The masters of the loom!
ALBERT. We wove Heaven's flowers into our handiwork!
JOHN WIBLEY. Is this base labour worthy of a man?
Set clockwork dolls to mind machinery,
Not Britons!
ENGINEER. 'Tis a fruitless war you wage.
In all the towns of England and abroad
Machinery awakes to mighty life.
It points the forward road that we must march.
JOHN WIBLEY. The man who counsels service to that engine
Means ill by us! Remember Ure's conditions!
NED LUD. Remember Jimmy too.
JOHN WIBLEY. He counselled patience.
Patience! The language that all traitors hold!
We are to sell ourselves for evermore,
And who dares say to us "Have patience"?
What truck have we with State and Parliament?
We battle with our nearest enemy,
The engine in the mill. Will you be slaves?
WORKMEN. No!
JOHN WIBLEY. Arms, legs and feet? Or jacks and screws and hammers?
WORKMEN. No, no!
ALBERT. We want to work as we were used to do!
JOHN WIBLEY. So we shall gain the mastery for ourselves!
NED LUD. We gave our word to Jimmy.
JOHN WIBLEY. To a traitor!
NED LUD. That is false.
JOHN WIBLEY. Ure's hireling, Henry Cobbett
Betrayed us first, and Jimmy is his brother.
CRIES. That's true! That's true!
NED LUD. And Jimmy is his brother?
JOHN WIBLEY. Why do you flinch? If you are not with us,
If you're afraid, then go!
NED LUD. What, I! afraid?
JOHN WIBLEY. Think of your wife!
CHARLES. Your children!
GEORGE. Or the devil!
WILLIAM. Think of the Tyrant Steam!
EDWARD. Our women fight!
CHARLES. They set three thieving bakers on the run!
TOM. While we do naught but prate.
ARTHUR. What should we do?
JOHN WIBLEY. Now, Lud, a deed to prove that you're our friend!
The old mark offers. Death to the machine!

(*A sudden silence falls.* NED LUD *goes up to the steam engine. The overseer, strike-breakers, women and children take flight.*)

NED LUD. So Henry Cobbett is his brother?
Death to the devil's brood—and death!

(*He strikes the engine. The blow falls on the starting lever, and the machinery begins to work. The looms are set in motion. The workmen shrink back in consternation.*)

CHARLES (*crying out*). 'Tis witchcraft! Devilry!
ARTHUR (*after a pause*). I can't speak like John and Jimmy—but—but I can take a spade in hand and—and summon up my pluck—and mark my man—and—strike! (*He hacks at the engine. The fly-wheel catches him. He cries out.*) Oh, mother! Mother!

(*The workmen shrink away. Stupor seems to overtake them.*)

EDWARD. The enemy of mankind has swallowed him!
NED LUD. The enemy of mankind has taken him to itself. (*He sees a workman stealing a copper vessel.*) Now give that here! No thieving! Would you steal from a dead enemy on the field? We are at war, mark that. The laws of war hold good. Looters are shot. What are you laughing at? Is it a laughing matter when you kill a man in battle? We stand and gibber at a shadow, brothers. On! (*He rushes at the machine and strikes.*) You hag! You devil-spawn!

(*The others, shamed into action in spite of their fear, rush upon the engine. It is shattered by their blows.*)

CRIES. Hey, chain us up, old man of iron! Juggernaut! Break our backs for us!

(*A storm has arisen. The doors are blown to by a gust of wind, and the lamps are put out. In the gloom is heard an outburst of fitful, crazy laughter.*)

ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
GEORGE. Almighty God! The engine's *laughing* at us!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
CRIES. Run! Run!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
CRY. The door! Where is the door!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
CRIES. The wind holds it fast! The wind's in league with Satan
ENGINEER (*on the bridge, as if in a frenzy*). Hihuhaha!
I say to you the engine is not dead!
It lives! It lives! It reaches out a claw
To clutch the hearts of men. Hihuhaha!
Against the villages roll marching hosts,
The fields are wither'd by their sulphurous breath,
And stony wastes are left where children die,

And men are govern'd by a cruel clock
That beats a doleful time—tick-tack, tick-tack
For morning, noon and night—tick-tack, tick-tack.
One shall be arm, another leg, a third
Brain—but the soul, the soul is dead.

ALL. The soul,
The soul is dead!

(*A silence.*)

ENGINEER. Hihuhaha! Hihuhaha!
VOICES. He laughs! He is bewitched!
A CRY. The spirit of the engine has possessed him!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha! Hihuhaha!
The greedy jaws of war will gape for men
And nations will be fodder—brothers foes,
And justice outlaw'd, order piled in dust!
Against their Mother Earth her children rise
To slay her creatures and uproot her woods,
Her godlike creatures and her godlike woods,
And shame her motherhood—the end is dust!
JOHN WIBLEY. Grab hold of him! He has the evil eye!
He is possessed!
ALBERT. Do for him!
CRIES. Strike him dead!
ENGINEER. Strike him dead! Hihuhaha!

(*Confusion. They try to catch the* ENGINEER. *Workmen pursue workmen in the darkness; the* ENGINEER *runs hither and thither. Then voices in quick succession.*)

ENGINEER (*in the foreground*). Machine—machine! Hihuhaha!
Hihuhaha!
CRY. Not me! Spare me!
ENGINEER (*from the background*). I show the way, and I am born
in blood,
Hihuhaha, hihuhaha!
CRY. Yonder! Yonder he runs!
CRY. Not me! Spare me!
ENGINEER (*from the bridge*). I am no enemy. No enemy of yours!
Hihuhaha! Hihuhaha!
CRY. He stabbed me!
ENGINEER (*as if from a distance*). For ever crucified—hihuhaha!
NED LUD. The Last Day comes!
ENGINEER (*loudly*). Out of the deep I cry!
GEORGE. A man is hanging at the window!
CHARLES. 'Tis the Engineer!
ALBERT. 'Tis Death!
NED LUD. He was possessed—his life fulfilled.

(*A silence* JIMMY *rushes in.*)

JIMMY. You played your brothers false, you perjurers!

CRIES. Scatter his brains! Pluck out his guts!

JIMMY. You broke your oath. Our league was made by Englishmen. You played it false.

JOHN WIBLEY. Fine words to catch fine birds. Are you the brother of Ure's overseer?

JIMMY. What does that matter?

JOHN WIBLEY. Answer yes or no!

JIMMY. Yes!

CRIES. Traitor! Traitor!

JOHN WIBLEY. Who mocked our womenfolk—your brother or a stranger?

JIMMY. My brother—and a stranger.

JOHN WIBLEY. The web is woven.

CRIES. He would have bound us fast to Tyrant Steam! The devil's drudge!

JIMMY. Let me tell you——

CRIES. Not a word!

NED LUD. I would have staked my head on this man's faith.

JOHN WIBLEY. And would you leave the traitor's tongue, the traitor's eyes, to live? Pull his tongue from his mouth! Tear his eyes from their sockets!

NED LUD. Traitor!

(*He fells* JIMMY *with a blow of his fist.* JIMMY *looks at him quietly.* NED LUD *draws back.* JOHN WIBLEY *goes up to* JIMMY *and spits on him.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. Take that, if you're thirsty! A stirrup-cup before you start for hell!

JIMMY. Brute! (*He raises himself.*)

I held you for free men, but you were slaves,
All slaves! The masters bought your womenfolk
While you went cap in hand for wages. Slaves!
Cramm'd into uniforms, you cried Hurrah
And stood at the salute. Obedient slaves!
The deed you did to-day is but a deed
Of slaves who mutiny. What do you desire?
The power of your masters—slaves?
The tyranny of your masters—slaves?
The pleasures of your masters—slaves?
The man who flogs you on the road to freedom
Is made your chosen leader—slaves!

(*A silence.*)

Brothers, forgive my passion—brother slaves,
There was no man to teach you otherwise.

You fought, but you mistook your enemy.
O brothers, if the working folk of England
Are faithless to their calling, and neglect
To join the workers of the continent,
The workers of the world in fellowship,
To build the house of human brotherhood,
Then you are slaves until the end of time!

JOHN WIBLEY. What, mum! Are you milk-livered, all of you! The tongue from his mouth, the eyes from their sockets!

(*All except* JOHN WIBLEY *rush upon* JIMMY, *and beat him to death.* JOHN WIBLEY *turns away. A silence.*)

NED LUD (*going up to* JOHN WIBLEY). John, why were you the one to stand aside?

JOHN WIBLEY. I struck him first and last, behind the neck.

NED LUD. That's false.

JOHN WIBLEY. And are you grieved that he is dead?

NED LUD. I grieve for nothing, since he was a traitor. But 'twas you who shouted "The tongue from his mouth, his eyes from their sockets!"

JOHN WIBLEY (*trembling*). His eyes! And did you do it?

NED LUD. You were not even looking on!

JOHN WIBLEY. I—I——

NED LUD. Ah, now I understand! You cowardly cur!

(*He takes* JOHN WIBLEY *by the collar and drags him to the body.*)

You bellowed "Strike him dead!" and struck not once!

JOHN WIBLEY. I—can't abide the sight of blood—oh—oh——

NED LUD. What! You would swill blood and can't abide the sight of it! Blood—and blood—and blood—and daren't look on! You cried for murder and would strike no blow. You miserable coward! I could strangle you, but for your slimy neck! What have we done?

BEGGAR (*rushing in*). Jimmy! News for you!

NED LUD. Jimmy is dead.

BEGGAR. You've killed him?

NED LUD. Yes.

BEGGAR. And why?

CHARLES. His brother is Ure's overseer.

BEGGAR. And Jimmy?

NED LUD. His helper.

BEGGAR. Dolts, boobies, clodhoppers! You have killed a man who left mother and brother for your sakes, who forsook place and name for your sakes! But whom will you not kill—poor human creatures?

(*A silence.*)

GEORGE. Murdered, and none knows why.

WILLIAM. Murdered because a voice cried blood.

EDWARD. Murdered because a voice cried treachery.

NED LUD. Because that man cried treachery! What have we done?

GEORGE. That man?

NED LUD. John Wibley.

GEORGE. Where?

NED LUD. But there—there stood John Wibley—but a moment since——

WILLIAM. He's hopped the twig! He's flown!

NED LUD. What have we done?

GEORGE. He runs to Ure, maybe. He whimpers "I was not the one to strike the blow." He plots against us, and betrays his brothers for the thirty silver pieces!

BEGGAR. Thirty pieces—that's as may be. But I know that he betrays you, and he plots with Ure.

NED LUD. What have we done?

BEGGAR. The hour to beat your breasts was earlier, my masters. I came to tell you the police are on the way. One murder is enough. (*Knocking at the door.*) Too late!

VOICE OF THE OFFICER. Give yourselves up! The factory is surrounded!

NED LUD. Imprison us! We know what we have done!

We will pay forfeit for the man we slew!
But after us will come men better school'd,
More faithful, braver, to take up the fight
Against the rightful foe—and they will conquer!
Your Kingdom totters, masters of the world!

(*The door is opened, and the workmen leave the factory singing their weavers' song defiantly.* POLICE *are seen outside. For a while the stage is empty, then* OLD REAPER *and* TEDDY *enter.* OLD REAPER *shoulders his stick like a rifle.*)

OLD REAPER. Is God in sight?

TEDDY. Here's the machine, grandfather.

OLD REAPER. The hour draws near. He is the engine! God is the engine!

TEDDY. Grandfather, here's some one lying on the ground. It's Uncle Jimmy!

OLD REAPER (*taking aim*). Bang!

TEDDY. But look—but look—all torn—all torn!

OLD REAPER (*seeing* JIMMY'S *body*). Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

TEDDY. Home, grandfather! I'm afraid!

OLD REAPER. No need to be afraid, my children, any more. There is an end to grief. I've shot him—I, a bondsman's son. This evening at the setting of the sun I shot him. There he lies. Our Son, upon the earth, all bruised and broken. Where shall we bury him? In God's acre? To the knackers with him! (*Coming nearer.*) Ah, but

how he lies there, how he lies there! And his eyes, his eyes! You poor dear Son of Man! Present arms! Poor dear Son of Man! I have lived to see the day of deeds—and now 'tis past. I'm weary of this life. Ah, poor dear Son! (*He bends weeping over* JIMMY'S *body and kisses it.*) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. Ah, poor dear Son! We must bury him. We must be good to one another.

CURTAIN

TRANSFIGURATION

A Play, translated by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

ALARUM

Shatter the cup, the blinding crystal cup,
Its magic spills
As thick as pollen from the blackened hearts
Of blood-red tulips.

We wandered in a twilight world of wonder,
Touching with gentle hands the legends there;
Building great dream cathedrals
Of sunshine and of faith,
While roses fell around us . . .

Sudden a screaming discord: Murder!

Heavy with dreams and blind we stood,
With horror ringing in our ears.
Mankind cried out.

We saw vulgarity run mad;
Our feet were set on quicksands of despair.
A man cried out.

A man, a brother,
Moulded by suffering and joy,
By mad illusion and disdain;
A man, temple of the will,
Of rapturous joy and holy sorrow.
We heard the fierce and urgent cry:
The way!
The way!

O poet, lead us.

CHARACTERS

FRIEDRICH
PEOPLE
FRIEDRICH'S SISTER
HIS MOTHER
HIS UNCLE
HIS FRIEND
GABRIELE (The Friend's Sister)
FIRST SOLDIER
SECOND SOLDIER
WOUNDED SOLDIERS
MADMAN
CORPORAL
HOSPITAL NURSE
DOCTOR
OFFICER
BEGGAR-WOMAN
HER HUSBAND
CHAIRMAN
OLD GENTLEMAN (Anti-Pacifist)
PROFESSOR
PRIEST
AGITATOR
STUDENT
GIRL STUDENT
MAN WITH THE TURNED-UP COLLAR
SICK MAN
WOMAN
DEATH AS THE ENEMY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE GUISE OF A SOLDIER, A PROFESSOR, A JUDGE, A NIGHT VISITOR
SOLDIERS
CRIPPLES
NURSES
HOSPITAL ORDERLIES
SKELETONS
PRISONERS

The Scenes "Troop-train," "No-man's Land," "The Wounded Soldiers," "The Lodger," "Death and Resurrection," the "Mountaineers," are on the borderline between reality and unreality, to be thought of as scenes watched distantly in a dream.

The action takes place in Europe before the beginning of regeneration.
This work was begun in 1917, *in the third year of carnage. In its final form it was completed in February and March,* 1918, *in military prison.*

TRANSFIGURATION

THE BARRACKS OF THE DEAD

PROLOGUE: which can also be regarded as an Epilogue.

CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE

THE SKELETON FIGURE OF DEATH-BY-WAR
THE SKELETON FIGURE OF DEATH-BY-PEACE
SKELETONS

Night in a vast military cemetery. The graves, which are arranged in companies, are each marked by a simple grey cross of iron. Some of the crosses are decorated with a rose, others with a flaming heart, others with a little wreath of wild flowers. Apart from this they are all alike. Only the name and regiment is inscribed on the crosses of the private soldiers'; but at the side of every Company are the officers' graves marked by larger crosses decorated with flaming suns and each bearing the date of birth and civil occupation of the dead man. The skeleton figure of DEATH-BY-PEACE *enters wearing a top-hat and carrying a brightly coloured silk handkerchief. With him is the skeleton figure of* DEATH-BY-WAR *wearing a steel helmet and carrying in his hand a human thigh-bone—his Field-Marshal's baton. His breast is covered with orders.*

DEATH-BY-WAR. Well, here we are, old friend.
If only I had known you had trouble with your lungs
. . . However, believe me when I say I'm sorry . . .
I should hate to think
You regretted coming.
Well, here we are . . .
Everything nice and tidy
And in order.
There they are, buried by Companies;
Subalterns, N.C.O.'s and Privates
Just as in life—all quite correct.
Our gallant heroes!
The names are really quite superfluous,
But there they are—pure piety:
Numbers would have been enough.
And over there are the officers . . .
If you'd care to see who they were—
In civil life, I mean.
If you care to glance at them?

DEATH-BY-PEACE. Hm, hm, hm, hm!
Magnificent, my friend.
Magnificent!—I really mean it.
You make me quite envious.
DEATH-BY-WAR. You flatter me, dear friend.
I must confess
I thought your scepticism foolish:
I am familiar too with civil life.
But now I'm only too glad
To know you are convinced.
And now with your permission
We'll have them up on parade.
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Oh, certainly.
DEATH-BY-WAR. In Companies,
Forward
March!

From the graves the skeletons of dead officers and men arise wearing steel helmets. They stand stiffly at attention by their graves.)

Shoulder arms!

(*The skeletons snatch up their crosses and shoulder them; the officers hold theirs as though they were swords.*)

Attention!
Officers
Take command!

The officers hurry to the right, ranging themselves as Company leaders.

Dress by the right!
Eyes front! Quick march!
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Congratulations, sir! My heartiest congratulations!
Really, you know, it would be terrible
If I tried anything like this!
Thousands and thousands
Of women and children,
And a few old, halting greybeards
For officers,
Leaning on their umbrellas.
Yes, I must admit you have me beaten.
There is a certain order
In your life;
Mine is pure chaos.
DEATH-BY-WAR. Really, my friend, you flatter me.
Practice and discipline—that's all.
You could apply it too. . . .
In Companies, right wheel!
Halt!

Attention !
Stand at ease !
Senior officer forward !

(*A Colonel salutes and steps shakily forward.*)

Very good.
Lay down your arms !

(*They put back their crosses.*)

Attention !
Company,
Roll heads !
Colonel,
You will take charge.

(*The Soldiers, hands on hips, roll their skulls, supervised by the Company Commanders with the Colonel as Commander-in-Chief.*)

DEATH-BY-PEACE. You really thought of this yourself, my friend ?
Your own idea ?
DEATH-BY-WAR. How do you mean ?
DEATH-BY-PEACE. All this business—
Did it originate entirely in your own skull ?
That's all I mean . . .
DEATH-BY-WAR. I see. Well, well—
It's not so simple as it sounds . . .
How shall I put it ?
I'm sure you'll understand . . .
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Yes, I see, I see.
But wait a moment.
DEATH-BY-WAR. Attention !
Company, dismiss !
Back to your grrraves !

(*The men return to their graves.*)

Thank you, gentlemen . . .
Criticism can wait until next time.

(*The Officers return to their graves. There is silence. Then suddenly* DEATH-BY-PEACE *bursts out laughing.*)

You surprise me, sir !
Did anything go wrong ?
Was anything overlooked ?

(DEATH-BY-PEACE *continues to guffaw, fanning himself with his bandana.*)

Explain yourself, sir !
Your laughter is insulting !
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Your humbug is insulting !
I was right to doubt your word—

I'm nothing but a fool to let myself
Be humbugged into admiration.
I called my kingdom chaos . . .
I did myself injustice.
I am the leveller
In whose eyes all are equal.
There are differences, of course—
The rich are sometimes tactless . . .
Still, such discipline as yours
Is foreign to our world.
You play at being victor,
You who yourself are vanquished—
Vanquished by war, my friend,
Conquered, and compelled
To die by numbers!
Officers, N.C.O.'s, military discipline—
A regular barracks!
You should have been a Sergeant Major!
Death subservient to a lot of Colonels—
Whatever next!
My friend, your bluff is called!
You'll be the general laughing stock
Unless you clear off quickly
While you can!

DEATH-BY-WAR. Infamous! Intolerable!
I refuse to argue!

DEATH-BY-PEACE. Just one small parodox
To bring this little interview
To a successful close . . .
You are a modern Death—
A product of the times,
Comparable to the futile living of to-day
Where everything is rotten under tinsel.
Good-bye, you petty, miserable Death,
Good-bye, you snobbish little hypocrite,
Propped up with military phrases.
Good-bye, and give my compliments
To your lords and masters,
The men of war!
Haha! Haha! Hahahaa!

(*He goes off shaking with laughter.*)

DEATH-BY-WAR (*stands dazed; then tears up a tuft of grass and wipes the sweat from his skull*). God damn his eyes!
It seems to me
I'm just about played out!

CURTAIN

FIRST STATION

Scene I

An ugly room in a town house with the furniture barely perceptible in the dusk of evening. Standing in the windows of the houses across the street are Christmas-trees lit up by candles. Friedrich *leans against the window-sill.*

Friedrich. They are lighting the candles. Candles of love. Mysteries reveal themselves, love reveals itself in the light of candles . . . while I, a Jew, outcast, struggle between one shore and the next, far from the old and farther from the new. A nasty hybrid. Wasn't there a sudden stirring of sympathy in the room when she said, come and see me? Many thanks, Fräulein—your humble servant—you may be sure I shall be punctual. Artificial smile to order! Tragi-comic puppet. . . . No—I'll no longer drag around this weariness. What are they to me—my people? Their blood is in my veins, but what is that to me? It is to you over there I belong—to you. A simple creature, ready to prove himself. There must be an end to all this compromise and self-division! An end to all this proud defence of what I really scorn! I must be brave.

(*His* Mother *enters.*)

Mother. Back at last, Friedrich? Where have you been all day?

Friedrich. Wandering, Mother. Wandering—as usual. Don't look at me like that, Mother . . . I've told you—wandering. Like him, Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew whose shadow crawls through fettered streets, who hides in dark and pestilential cellars, who gathers rotten swedes in the frozen fields at night. . . . Yes, it is him I seek; my great brother, Ahasuerus, the eternal wanderer, the homeless one . . .

Mother. You blaspheme against your name, Friedrich. You are not homeless.

Friedrich. Then where is my home, Mother? They have homes, over there; homes of their own to which they belong. Over there they are at one with themselves and with their homes . . . free from the weariness of life, the sickness which corrodes and poisons thought and feeling. . . . They can laugh, over there, and live with joy in their hearts. They have their own land in which they are rooted, for which they can live and die.

Mother. You are feverish, Friedrich.

Friedrich. Yes, I am feverish, Mother! Won't you give me a

sedative? If only you were feverish as I am! Now you are sad, Mother. Now you grieve because I have never been a good son—the good son who always smiles so lovingly upon his mother . . . like the good sons of all your friends. Oh, they are so touching, those tastefully composed family pictures from well-bred homes!

MOTHER. I refuse to talk to you, Friedrich. You are restless and full of foolish thoughts; and it's all because you are out of work. I don't want to hinder you in your ambition. Go on with your sculpture if you must. But first make some provision for your future. Take up some steady job to earn the money for your sculpture. I may say your uncle Richard agrees with me in all this.

FRIEDRICH. So Uncle Richard agrees! Well, well, well! And didn't he cite the case of Strindberg, who spent the last ten years of his life "a ruined man"? . . . Didn't he say how he regretted having missed a chance of immortality through Strindberg? Missed his opportunity to become "a figure in literary history," as he puts it so beautifully? Yes, if only he had given Strindberg a little money when he asked! If only he had done that, this righteous citizen! But if ever he met a second Strindberg he would soon decide he was nothing but a decadent dilettante and leave him to starve, calming his own agitated conscience by increased speculation on the Stock Exchange. Good, kind, business man!

MOTHER. Your father was also a good, kind business man, remember.

FRIEDRICH. I know, Mother, I know! Yes, he was kind and good, too. He left you to work and run the house while he went off on shooting parties . . . good, kind father! He would talk to me about living respectably, about the solid virtues. And when I wanted to get away—to get away from here—he forced me to stay. . . . He was my jailer!

MOTHER. Friedrich! I will not allow you to speak like that of your father. Believe me, Friedrich, your words hurt nobody but yourself. . . . However, you are upset to-day, and I have no desire to upset you further. . . . We will talk about it later when you are calmer. . . . Meanwhile I have just one thing to ask you, a tiny favour—just to please your old mother. Friedrich, I beg you to attend Divine Worship. People would be so . . .

FRIEDRICH. People! Why not be honest and call it Public Service, not Divine? What is your God but a cruel and narrow judge, judging all men by cut and dried laws? Judging always by the same dead laws? Divine Service—homage to bigotry! It's revolting! Are you any more free when you leave your House of God? No, no. . . . And the narrowness of this noble House of God is suffocating, I tell you, suffocating!

MOTHER. When your father died he left us very badly off. I scraped and saved to keep you, to send you to school, to make life easier for you than it had been for us. I slaved to make things easy for you in every conceivable way. You must understand: I am your mother,

you are my child. Everything I had was for my children. Nothing, nothing for myself.

FRIEDRICH. True, Mother, true. I could weep even to think of it. But am I ungrateful, am I quite a brute to you? No, I am not that, Mother. You cared for my material needs; you tried to make it easier for me to earn money now . . . yes, you have laid the foundations of my material future. But what have you done for my *soul*? You taught me to hate all who don't belong to our race. Why?

MOTHER. They do not like us. They only tolerate us. They despise us.

FRIEDRICH. Oh no, oh no! They are full of kindness, gentleness and love; all-embracing love. Look! See the candles they have lit over there—candles radiating love and kindness. . . . I called you mother because you bore me, but can I still call you mother when you leave my naked soul exposed, as foolish mothers leave their babes naked to the cold?

(*His* MOTHER *goes out silently.*)

Now a bond is snapped. . . . Or was it really broken all those years ago? . . . It had to break. . . . Mother . . . (*Silence.*) No, it's no use. . . . Now they are giving out the presents. The children are singing now. When did I ever sing here in my childhood—really sing?

(*His* FRIEND *enters.*)

FRIEND. Good evening, Friedrich! Gabriele asked me to come, and anyway I intended . . .

FRIEDRICH. Tell her I cannot come. I'm feverish, ill.

FRIEND. I don't like to leave you alone.

FRIEDRICH. No? Very kind, I'm sure. Thank you, thank you. . . . However, sit down—over there. Would you like to do a little bargain? A good table knife for a box of drawing tools? The compasses are admittedly a little faulty, but you'd hardly notice it. I've arranged them in the box so that they look all right.

FRIEND. Friedrich, why must you torment yourself like this, and me too?

(FRIEDRICH *embraces his* FRIEND *and begins to sob.*)

There, you poor fellow.

FRIEDRICH. I am not poor; and I don't want your sympathy. I don't need it. Nor your sister's either. I'll release her from the humiliation of being seen out with me. I've women enough over there in the narrow streets . . . I've enough money for that. But I don't need you. I am strong enough by myself. I need nobody, neither them nor you.

FRIEND. In that case I had better go. But you can always count on me.

FRIEDRICH. Count on you? Ask you for help? Never . . . !

FRIEND. No, I did not mean it like that. But before I go I had better tell you what I came for. . . . Special late night final—fighting has begun in the Colonies. They want volunteers. I wish I could go myself, but my people won't allow me to.

FRIEDRICH (*as though suddenly awakened*). Won't allow you ?—And you let the matter rest there ? You can't be serious. . . . They want volunteers. . . . Forgive me if I behaved like a brute just now. Forgive me if I spoke roughly. . . . Volunteers wanted. Release, release from stifling, barren, narrowness ! Oh, but the struggle will unite us all ! The greatness of the times will make us all great. . . . The resurrection of the spirit. . . . All pettiness forgotten, all childish limitations swept away. . . . Once more shall the spirit shine forth in its eternal beauty. . . . As for me—as for me, this is a Heaven-sent gift. . . . Volunteers wanted ! Was I half-hearted ? I feel myself strong ! Strong to embrace my duty. Now I can prove that I belong to you ! Now I can prove I'm no outsider ! . . . . Where can I enlist ? At the town-hall ?

(FRIEND *nods.*)

I am so happy, so happy. Apologize to Gabriele for me. I have found my country at last. Tell her that joy has come to me—joy on the evening of love. You see the Christmas-trees over there ? A tree in every window. . . . Tell Gabriele that I thank her from my heart ; and greet her for me. She will understand why I do not come myself ; she will understand and be glad. (*Rushing out.*) Now I can prove myself, prove myself !

Darkness.

SCENE II

Compartment of a travelling troop-train. Badly burning oil-lamps shed a meagre, flickering light on the sleeping SOLDIERS *huddled close together. With them one silent soldier* (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*) *and another with a skull for a head : both shadowy figures.*

FIRST SOLDIER. How long must we rattle through the night.
Lurching, lurching in the grinding of machinery,
Tortured machinery ?

SECOND SOLDIER. Time without end and space without end,
Days, weeks, nobody can tell.
Would that I lay sleeping in my mother's womb.

THIRD SOLDIER. Would that an earthquake had swallowed up the house
When my mother lay in my father's arms.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Would that a fiery ball from Heaven
Had struck down the man who lured
My mother to the wood.

FIFTH SOLDIER. Words, foolish words! Year after year
The bitter coffin holds us here enclosed;
Year after year the flesh falls away,
Human flesh stinking and decayed.
SIXTH SOLDIER. Aimlessly we wander, like frightened children
Driven by a senseless tyranny,
Murdering, hungering, creatures of violence—
Children, frightened children,
Overtaken by a long dark night.
SEVENTH SOLDIER. If only I could pray. Kind and sweet words
Which my mother so tenderly taught me,
Babbled now with careless lips and cruel . . .
FIRST SOLDIER. Endlessly we journey.
SECOND SOLDIER. Endlessly the engine roars and groans.
THIRD SOLDIER. Endlessly we marry, endlessly we breed;
And evil springs eternally from lust.
FOURTH SOLDIER. Stars spring from the womb of Time
And Time eternally is ravaged and gives birth.
FIFTH SOLDIER. Endlessly rotting.
SIXTH SOLDIER. Endlessly children in fear of the father.
SEVENTH SOLDIER. Sacrificed by mothers, shivering, cold.
ALL. Endlessly journeying,
Endlessly . . .

CURTAIN

SECOND STATION

Scene III

An hour before sunset. A water-hole in the desert.

First Soldier. Dusk is falling, but the heat is as thick as a blanket. Is the boss asleep?

Second Soldier. Why shouldn't he sleep? Tent pitched, mosquito-net put up, while he stood watching with his hands in his pockets —now he's sleeping.

First Soldier. They can sing if they want to. I've had enough for to-day.

Wounded Man. Water!

First Soldier. Give him water!

(Friedrich *gives him water.*)

Wounded Man. Take the corpses away. Everywhere I go there's corpses.—You want to saw my leg off? It hurts all right.—But I wanted to be a dancing master, *one*, two three . . . *one*, two, three—that's how a waltz goes.

Friedrich. Try to sleep, chum!

Wounded Man. But take the corpses away. I don't want to teach them to dance . . . they . . . are . . . tormenting . . . me . . . I suppose I'd better though . . . Won't anybody strike up? . . . (*sings*) *one* . . . two, three, *one* . . . two, three—that's how a waltz goes.

Friedrich. Try to sleep. Give me your hand. I won't hurt you. I'll put a cool wet cloth on your forehead. Dreams will come and ask you to dance, garlanded dreams—they'll dance with you over the heather, and away to your home.

Wounded Man (*sings*). *One* . . . two, three, . . . *one* . . . two, three . . .

Friedrich. Oh God!

First Soldier. Why bring Him into it? He's all right for the officers, bringing true religion to the heathen with fire and murder. I am the Redeemer, rejoice in Me! Only let them blow your brains out and you'll find eternal bliss!

Friedrich. It must be; it must be!

Second Soldier. What must be? Fire and murder? Or hospitals and mad-houses?

Friedrich. For our country's sake!

First Soldier. Country? I don't know so much about country.

All I know are toffs flinging money about and workers sweating to save it.

FRIEDRICH. But how could you live without a country? I'd go mad with all this horror if I couldn't grit my teeth and say "It's all for my country."

SECOND SOLDIER. You're a funny one to talk like that.

FRIEDRICH. Why any funnier than you?

FIRST SOLDIER. And you a foreigner? Ha, ha!

FRIEDRICH. I'm not a foreigner. I'm one of you.

SECOND SOLDIER. If you fought with us a thousand times you'd still be a foreigner.

FIRST SOLDIER (*calmly*). There's a curse on you. You're a man without country.

WOUNDED MAN. A man . . . with . . . out . . . a . . . coun . . . try . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . that's . . . how . . . a waltz goes . . .

FRIEDRICH. Haven't I proved myself, on duty here and at home, in raids and on guard?—haven't I proved that I'm one of you?—Have I ever panicked and run away? Have I ever skulked in shell-holes?

SECOND SOLDIER. You're still a foreigner.

FRIEDRICH. Then I'll have to fight for my country in spite of you. For who can rob me of it? I carry it in my heart.

FIRST SOLDIER (*genially*). You'll have to get used to the idea, chum. If it comes to that none of us has got a country. We're just like a lot of whores.

(*The two* SOLDIERS *lie down and sleep.*)

FRIEDRICH. The outraged earth trembles under me; the trees are withered; the wilderness crawls nearer—where shall I go? I entered a house and it burned to ashes over me. (*Laughing aloud.*) Ha, how the rafters crackled in the blaze!

(*The* LUNATIC *during this last speech has crept up to* FRIEDRICH.)

LUNATIC. Little brother . . .

FRIEDRICH. Who's that?

LUNATIC. Little brother . . .

FRIEDRICH. What do you want?

LUNATIC. Don't be afraid.

FRIEDRICH. Where have you come from?

LUNATIC. The sandstorm drove me here.

FRIEDRICH. You live over there?

LUNATIC. Live? I died over there. . . . Aye, there are many dying over there. . . . They're running, running . . .

FRIEDRICH. From the sandstorm?

LUNATIC. I'm thirsty.

FRIEDRICH. Here, drink this.

LUNATIC. I can drink my own blood, I don't need yours . . . fool . . . idiot . . . blockhead . . . little brother . . .

FRIEDRICH. You're bleeding!

LUNATIC. Don't worry about that. I can drink blood.

SECOND SOLDIER. What's all that row?

FRIEDRICH. I think——

(SECOND SOLDIER *notices the* LUNATIC.)

SECOND SOLDIER. He's ill, that fellow!

(LUNATIC *begins to babble.*)

FIRST SOLDIER. Mad, is he? He'll have strayed from the camp along the line.

LUNATIC (*begins to weep*). Home . . . I want to go home . . .

SECOND SOLDIER. Take him to the Red Cross station.

FRIEDRICH. Oh God!

FIRST SOLDIER. I am the Redeemer, rejoice in Me. I'll take him over to the Red Cross. The Red means that the blood will be washed away.

FRIEDRICH. It must be so. It is for our country's sake!

(CORPORAL *enters.*)

CORPORAL. Another man wanted. Patrol to get information about the enemy reserves. One of you must come back, so we're sending five to make sure. Any volunteers?

FRIEDRICH. I'll go. I'll go, and damn you all!

Darkness.

SCENE IV

No-man's land. Dark clouds sweep across the face of the moon. To right and left are barbed-wire entanglements in which hang skeletons white with quicklime. The earth is torn up with craters and shell-holes.

FIRST SKELETON. I feel so lonely.
The others all lie sleeping round.
Still, I feel the cold no longer,
The deadly cold which racked me through
While I hung dying here
Caught between friend and foe.
The quicklime did its work,
The bloody shreds of skin and flesh
Soon fell away.
Aha! Now I can clap my hands!

(*The* SECOND SKELETON, *caught in the opposite wire entanglement, moves.*)

SECOND SKELETON. There, they've started up again,
The blighters. I have to dodge
Their blasted bullets all the time.

Still, I don't feel hungry any more—
Who's that? A cold and bony hand . . .
Let go, I tell you,
Let me go!
Ah, I forgot . . .
It is my own right hand
Clutching with rigid fingers
At myself . . .

FIRST SKELETON. Don't look so down, old man!
I've learnt to do a nigger dance
And rattle my loose joints.
To-day we're no more friends and enemies,
To-day we're no more black and white,
Now we are all alike.
The worms soon ate our coloured skins,
And now we are all alike.
Gentlemen . . . let's dance.

(*The* SKELETONS *between the wire entanglements shake off the earth from their bones.*)

SKELETONS. Now we are all alike.
Gentlemen . . . let's dance!

FIRST SKELETON. The coloured ribbons on our chests
Have long ago decayed.
Our names were in the newspapers
All bordered round with black.
Aha—let's dance!

SECOND SKELETON. You over there! You without legs!
Pick up your shins and rattle them,
Clap time for us while we dance!

ALL (*laugh*). You over there! You without legs!
Pick up your shins and rattle them,
Clap time for us while we dance!

(*The legless* SKELETONS *pick up their shin-bones and rattle them together. The others dance.*)

FIRST SKELETON. Haha, what have we here?
You over there—why don't you dance?

ALL. Gentlemen . . . let's dance!

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). I'm so ashamed!

SECOND SKELETON. Ashamed?
Really, gentlemen . . . shame! (*He covers his nakedness with his hands.*) I think we all were—once.

(*All cover their nakedness hastily.*)

FIRST SKELETON. The wilderness drove shame away for ever.
Who of us knows shame to-day?

Fools ! Idiots !
Aren't we all naked here ?
Behind our naked bones
Yawns emptiness.

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). Not emptiness . . .

FIRST SKELETON. What ?

SECOND SKELETON. Good God . . .

ALL. Hihi ! Hoho !
Hihi ! Hoho !

FIRST SKELETON. My good sir, are you not well ?
Good sir, we wish to dance !

ALL. To dance ! Dance !

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). I'm not a man.

SECOND SKELETON. What then ?

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). A . . . girl . . .

FIRST SKELETON. Gentlemen ! Cover yourselves !

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). Just thirteen years old . . .
Why do you look at me like that ?

FIRST SKELETON. Young woman, regard me as your protector !

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). Then I need not be afraid ?
I mean, there were so many.

FIRST SKELETON. So many when ?

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). That evening.
Even to-day I don't know why they did it.
Did it really have to be like that, sir ?
One had hardly gone away
Before the next got into bed with me.

SECOND SKELETON. And then ?

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). And then . . . I died of it.

FIRST SKELETON. She died of it !
A charming phrase !
A lovely phrase !
She died of it !
Gentlemen, you are trembling
And your hands . . . hoho . . .
Your hands are still . . .

(*All lower their hands.*)

FIRST SKELETON. There's no shame here, my child !
How should there be ? . . . Would you know
Us from yourself ?
Now we are all alike.
Into the middle with you, then,
If I may make so bold !
You have been outraged ?
Good ; so have we all !

It's nothing but a waste of breath
To talk about it now.
There! You're a clever girl!
Stand here, please, in the middle.

(*They all join hands and form a circle, dancing vigorously round and round the skeleton of the girl.*)

CURTAIN

THIRD STATION

Scene V

Dawn. A Field Hospital, a simple, white-washed room. Over the bed is a crucifix.

Doctor. He's still sleeping.

Sister. He's done nothing but groan and throw himself about for the last three nights. He fancies he's wandering through the desert. Cries for water. Cries he must reach the mountains, the rocky peaks ; but the desert stretches endlessly before him and he can't escape.

Doctor. Quinine, double doses of quinine. A case of nervous shock, those others would think. Think ! Think ! We don't think, we diagnose. It's nothing of the kind. Quite a different matter altogether. . . . Chronic debility of the digestive organs—three spoonfuls of castor oil and two aspirins night and morning . . . uninteresting little case, quite uninteresting. Where is the new one ? Was he given castor oil when they brought him in ? No ? Really, sister, that's most annoying. Inexcusable too. I can't put up with any neglect of duty here. Matter of principle ! Principle !

Sister. Shall I tell him when he wakes up ?

Doctor. Of course, of course. A little upset's all to the good. Stimulates the muscles of the rectum.

(*Both go off.*)

Friedrich (*delirious*). Where are you all ? . . . Oh, the desert sandstorm . . . like a stinging, gritty fog . . . no rest . . . on . . . on . . . I don't know you—who are you ? . . . Ahasuerus . . . cursed one ! . . . Back, back ! No holes for you here . . . I won't go with you . . . no, (*shouting*) no ! (*Waking up.*) Water !

(*Red-cross* Nurse *enters.*)

Nurse. There, drink this.

Friedrich. Are you the Mother of God ?

Nurse. You must lie quite still.

Friedrich. You bear the cross . . . the cross upon your arm . . . My God, is this where they wash away the blood ?

Nurse. We are going to heal you here.

Friedrich. Yes, heal. Your hands are so gentle and cool on my forehead. Look—see how hard mine are.

Nurse. Work has stained and roughened them.

Friedrich. You wear the cross of love, you dispense love . . .

NURSE. To all who lie here, to black as well as white.

FRIEDRICH. Only to us? That's not enough, nurse—why not to all the others too . . . to all . . .

NURSE. They are fighting against us.

FRIEDRICH. Yes, I know . . . It has to be . . . How long have I been here?

NURSE. Three days now. You're quite a hero, you know!

FRIEDRICH. Did they take me prisoner?

NURSE. You were found lashed to a tree; the sole survivor.

FRIEDRICH. Not to a cross . . . the sole survivor . . .

NURSE. Do you feel strong enough to see the Colonel? He has your decoration.

(FRIEDRICH *is silent.*)

COLONEL. Congratulations, young fellow! Your gallantry under the most horrible tortures was simply superb, and your country recognizes your devotion. I have been elected to present you with the cross for valour. You were a stranger among us, but now you are become one of us.

FRIEDRICH. The cross? And now I am one of you?

COLONEL. Now you are one of us . . .

(*Noise outside.*)

COLONEL. What's that?

NURSE (*joyfully*). A great victory, God has granted us a great victory! Ten thousand killed!

COLONEL. You see, my friend . . . Victory is in the air, and you are one of the victors.

(FRIEDRICH *is left alone.*)

FRIEDRICH. The jubilation in their faces! Ten thousand dead! Ten thousand have died that I may find a country. Why don't you laugh? Is that liberation? Is this a time of greatness? Are these the people of greatness? (*Staring rigidly before him.*) Now I am one of you.

Darkness.

SCENE VI

Part of an immense room made oppressive by the lowness of the ceiling. Rows of beds in which lie wounded soldiers, all in grey shirts. HOSPITAL ORDERLIES *appear.*

ORDERLIES. Everything nice and tidy,
Everything in order.
Beds in a nice neat row,
All alike and tidy.

Well, we've done our duty.
The doctor when he comes will find
Nothing at all to grumble at.
We're ready for him now.

(PROFESSOR *enters with his class of* STUDENTS. *He wears a well-cut black morning-coat. Instead of a head he has a skull, and his eye-sockets gleam through gold-rimmed spectacles.*)

PROFESSOR. Yes, gentlemen,
We can face all horrors here.
We might indeed call our work positive,
The negative being the munition works.
In other words we deal in synthesis;
The armament men are merely analysts.
Haha!
Chemists and engineers can quietly make new weapons
And manufacture unconceived-of gases;
Their services to war are greatly valued.
But we, my friends, are not content
To do the rescue work that's proper to the doctor.
While we are here, before we go the rounds,
Let me just demonstrate the last of our achievements,
Entirely due, I must admit, to my own labours.
Just show the seven new cases on the screen.

(ORDERLIES *put up a square white screen. One of them beckons and seven naked* CRIPPLES *march forward like clockwork figures. They are all truncated. None of them has arms or legs. Instead they jerk along with black, artificial legs, parading before the screen in single file.*)

ORDERLY. Halt!

(*The men obey. In the silence the clicking of their artificial limbs is audible.*)

Left turn!

(*They obey. Suddenly a dark lantern flashes out, and the expressions of the seven cripples, illuminated by the dazzling white beam, are seen to be all alike and stereotyped.*)

PROFESSOR. Best view from here, gentlemen.
These are the men, for whom our glorious work
Has brought regeneration and rebirth.
Three months ago they were mere passive stumps!
To-day they stand before you—men!
Did you observe the pleasing willingness
With which they carried out my orders?
To say nothing of the exquisite precision
Of their synthetic movements.

So: here they are, my friends,
Restored in life and limb;
Men, citizens, useful members
Of society, waiting each to fill his place.
But there is more than meets the eye,
You have not guessed my masterpiece—
How should you?—Come closer, gentlemen!
These men, these stumps that were,
Can now enjoy the great prerogative of man.
By delicate and subtle mechanism
I have restored their procreative powers.
No longer impotent, once more they can
Enjoy the pleasures of the marriage bed!

(*One of the* STUDENTS (*with the features of* FRIEDRICH) *falls in a faint.* ORDERLIES *hurry to revive him with water.*)

PROFESSOR (*smiling sympathetically*). Poor young man, to faint in work like this!
How would he fare upon the field of battle?

(*The* STUDENT *covers his face with his hands and goes out, his walk involuntarily reproducing the mechanical walk of the* CRIPPLES.)

(*The electric light is extinguished. The* PROFESSOR, *the* STUDENTS, *the* CRIPPLES *and the* ORDERLIES *all turn pale. A* BLIND SOLDIER *gets out of his bed.*)

BLIND SOLDIER. Tell me, brothers, is it evening?
Is it night?
Night-time is soothing;
Night has cool, soft hands
To stroke my empty eyelids
Quietly.
Day is cruel to me,
The sun is scorching like a bitter fire,
It burns into my skin with pitiless breath.

ARMLESS SOLDIER. Will no one hear me?
I've been calling for so long.
Will no one help me?
Just a little necessary service . . .
Please help me, quickly, someone . . .
It is so horrible to have to lie
In one's own dung.

SPINAL PATIENT. You'd make a fuss if you'd been hit like me.
I'm used to it by now.
I hardly know to-day
Whether I am a man still or a living lavatory.
My bowels are blown to bits;
My heart's the only living thing about me . . .

Will no one here blow out my heart as well
And make a job of it?
I wallow in my filth, and fill myself and you
With loathing.
I curse my heart that keeps on beating.
My soul is long, long dead with loathing.
Only my heart beats on unpitying.
When I came to, the doctor said to me:
The bullet grazed your spine,
But we have saved you.
If that man knew what lay in store for me
He was a devil.
The only kindness he could do for me
Would be to drug me into sleep and death.
And if he did not know what lay in store for me
The madhouse is the only place for him.

FOURTH SOLDIER (*whose body is subject to ceaseless, horrible convulsions*). The madhouse . . . yes
That's just the thing . . .
The very thing . . . But no!
I know a better thing than that . . .
A dugout,
Shut him in a dugout
And blow the lot to bits . . .
Slowly—not too fast . . .
Direct hit!
When the smoke had cleared
I looked around . . . no good;
No way out at all . . . buried
. . . Buried . . . Alive . . .
I went mad . . . I clawed the head-boards
With my nails . . .
I swallowed earth;
My mouth was full of earth.
Digging, digging upwards . . .
Eating my way to air, to light . . .
I ate earth then;
I never knew it tasted good . . .
And then I fell asleep.
I woke up and was here . . .
Was it all that earth
That makes me tremble so?
Did I return to earth too soon?
And am I paying for it now?
Or is Earth having her revenge
For my escape?

FIFTH SOLDIER (*poisoned by gas*). My breath's a ruddy sparrow
That pipes and whistles . . .

My lung's a nest of sparrows . . .
But sparrows fly away,
Fly South in winter-time.
ALL. Each has his song;
We ought to form a male-voice choir.

(*A* PRIEST *enters* (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*), *a crucifix in his uplifted hands, which he holds out to the* WOUNDED SOLDIERS.)

PRIEST. I bring the Saviour,
Oh sad-faced sufferers.
He knows your misery and pain,
All ye who are oppressed, oh come to Him.
He offers healing, love.
ALL. Why does all-powerful God
Permit our suffering?
You say He knows
Our pain and suffering;
Then He is evil
To let it be.
PRIEST. Blasphemy!
ALL. You dare to call it blasphemy?
He it is who utters blasphemy,
And we who are blasphemed.
He, who asks us to believe
That He is with us in our suffering!
You dare call us blasphemers?
Then look, look, look at us!

(*The* WOUNDED SOLDIERS *raise themselves in their beds. The* PRIEST *slowly raises his head, and as he looks at them his eyes widen with horror. Slowly his upraised hands break the crucifix in two. He sinks to his knees.*)

PRIEST. How dared I ever
Think myself a priest,
With fine-spun sophistries
Proclaim myself God's chosen one?
Black horror seizes me
To think of those who solemnly ordained us.
I see the blasphemy
Of empty priesthood,
And I would cry aloud:
Free yourselves, free yourselves from all false priests!
Oh Christ, how are your teachings mocked!
There is no healing,
I see no light
To light this endless night;
Nowhere a guiding hand.
Prepare for your salvation . . .

How could I, myself in need of consolation,
In bitterer need than you,
Dole comfort out to you ?
I can no more ;
Now I walk with you, at your head . . .

ALL. Good luck,
You enviable one !

(THE NURSES *enter in a long procession.*)

THE NURSES. We bring you medicines,
Poor suffering ones ;
Drinks to assuage your thirst,
Cooling cloths
To ease your burning pain,
Soothing tablets
To lull you into sleep.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. What use is sleep to us ?
To-morrow only brings another day . . .
Oh, bring us drugs to lull us
Deep, deep, into an endless night,
That we may wake no more !

THE NURSES. You ask too much, poor suffering ones.
Healing we bring,
But death we may not bring.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. Too late, too late.
Your mending and your patching
Does us no good.
Why did you not prevent this horror ?
Why start your botching now ?
If you had taken thought before
You could be dancing now
With strong and joyful men !

THE NURSES. You wrong us.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. Look closely at us, look,
And say again
We wrong you.
You know not what you are, dear nurses.
Array yourselves in mourning ;
Cover your faces, bow your heads ;
Forget your Christian charity,
Or call it wretched, barren, botching.

(THE NURSES *raise their heads, shape their lips to a shattering cry, collapse.*)

(*Darkness. Then suddenly the lantern flashes out again. The seven* CRIPPLES *are still standing before the screen, watching them the* PROFESSOR, *the* STUDENTS *and the* ORDERLIES.)

PROFESSOR. It really is a splendid bit of luck
That we have all these cases here to study.

To-morrow we will make a comprehensive
Round of all the wards.
Meanwhile, let me repeat
My words of introduction.
We can face all horrors here.
We might indeed call our work positive,
The negative being the munition works.
In other words we deal in synthesis ;
The armament men are merely analysts.
Haha !

CURTAIN

FOURTH STATION

Scene VII

Early morning. A studio. Friedrich *is working at a more than life-size statue of a naked man, heavily muscular, with clenched, uplifted fists. There is brutality in the pose.*

Friedrich (*working*). The stone resists my efforts ; my hand upon the chisel cannot bring it to life. The chisel chips marble, dead marble ; am I powerless to breathe life into it ? If so I'll do no more. I will not be content to carve a mere memorial to life. . . . Life intense must stream from my creation . . . to wake men from their sleep . . . to fire them to fight for their country until death . . . to hurl defiance. . . . Defiance against whom ? . . . The enemy, of course. . . . But who decides that there shall be an enemy ? Is it some spiritual power within us that forces us to fight ? . . . Or is the enemy selected arbitrarily ? . . . There's a contradiction there. . . . Why can I not succeed ? . . . The problem is so great. Am I too small to symbolize it ? Too puny to pierce that brazen armour ?

(*The* Friend *enters.*)

Friend. I was so anxious I had to come—but I see you are working. My mind is full of foolish thoughts, but I won't disturb you. I will go.

Friedrich. My dear fellow, you don't disturb me in the least.

Friend. I see your great work will soon be finished. You've certainly laboured long and earnestly at it.

Friedrich. A year. But what's a year for the completion of a worthy symbol of our triumphant Fatherland ?

Friend. Do you still doubt ?

Friedrich. That your country is now mine as well ? No . . . Only . . .

Friend. Only ?

Friedrich. I sometimes wonder if there is not something higher still. And yet I don't really want to know. For if I knew there would be no escaping my destiny, I should become Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew.

Friend. And Gabriele ? Would she let you wander ? Would you not find fulfilment at her side ?

Friedrich. The struggle takes no account of women ; perhaps not even of us ourselves.

Friend. Gabriele would be unhappy.

Friedrich. Gabriele is strong.

FRIEND. Yes, she is strong.
FRIEDRICH. We come together proudly, joyfully.
FRIEND. You are so strong!
FRIEDRICH. So strong!
FRIEND. Farewell!

(*The* FRIEND *goes.* FRIEDRICH *works. The doorbell rings and* FRIEDRICH *goes to the door.*)

FRIEDRICH. Beloved!

(GABRIELE *enters. She tries to smile.*)

You look sad, my beloved. If I believed in good fairies I should wish that one would change my clumsy hands to butterflies, to brush away the sadness from your brow like pollen from dark flowers. I should wish to be with you among the sand-dunes where the children play; I should wish to climb high mountains with you, to wander with you on the farthest slopes. To wander with you in the darkness through dreaming towns, to overcome you in the poppy-fields and kiss you there with gladness in our hearts. . . . You are silent, dearest. You do not smile. . . .

GABRIELE. The tears are welling in my heart . . . but they are frozen, and cannot reach my eyes.

(FRIEDRICH *sits quietly beside her, and takes her hand.*)

I am going to leave you.

FRIEDRICH (*as though he had known what she would say*). You are going to leave me. (*Then, as though suddenly awakened.*) . . . You . . . are going to . . . leave me . . . ?

GABRIELE. I must.

FRIEDRICH. For my sake?

GABRIELE. For your sake.

FRIEDRICH. Do you love me?

GABRIELE. I love you as a woman loves a man whom she would have sweep her like a tempest, whom she would have as the father of her child.

FRIEDRICH. And yet . . . ?

GABRIELE. When my father said he would disown me for ever if I married you it was as though I were caught in a sudden blizzard; the icy snow-flakes burnt me. I came to you smiling. But my father would cast me out from my country for ever—never to see it again, never again to tread its soil. It is my childhood's memory, it is the blood that feeds my heart. I have fought against its influence for many days and many nights. And to-day at last I saw clearly: I can never give it up.

FRIEDRICH. And I thought you were strong!

GABRIELE. Perhaps it is because I am strong.

FRIEDRICH. But I shall stay . . . I too have roots, I too have a country of my own, to which I am bound with my heart's blood, to

which I have sacrificed my heart's blood ; your country, my country. The whole great Fatherland. You are weak, Gabriele, weak.

GABRIELE. Perhaps . . . Farewell !

(*She goes.*)

FRIEDRICH. Farewell, you who are strong. And now the dusk has fallen round me, dusk eternal. Day has slipped into the far golden sea. Night dreams in cloven gorges where the black moths flutter, a night that will never lift again. Oh Gabriele ! If you'd betrayed me —robbed me of my faith ! . . .

(*Sunbeams fall on the statue.*)

So you would remind me ? The triumph of the Fatherland. I believe in that, I will believe in that ; I will believe in it and symbolize it for ever. If it costs me my life I will do it.

(*He sets to work again. A hurdy-gurdy starts up in the courtyard below. He goes to the window, returns and renews his labours. The bell rings.* FRIEDRICH *opens the door. A* WOMAN *enters, a war-cripple, miserable and emaciated.*)

WOMAN. Alms for the poor, alms for the poor.

(FRIEDRICH, *about to offer her money, stops and considers.*)

FRIEDRICH. Are you a war-cripple ?

WOMAN (*weeping*). Must I tell you ? (*She shows him her ulcerated hands.*)

FRIEDRICH. Poor soul.

WOMAN. They surrounded me, they sidled up to me like jackals. . . . What should they know ? Driven out to fight like cattle. What do cattle know of morals ? What can they know ? And one among them was diseased and corrupted, and infected me. How can I tell you whether he was bad or not ? They called him a hero. They were all heroes. Wretched cattle in a slaughter-house.

FRIEDRICH. It had to be, poor woman, for our country's sake.

WOMAN. For our country's sake ? Our country ? For the sake of a small handful of rich men who feast and debauch and gamble with the products of our labour. Ah, how I hate them ! Brutes, devils ! I know them well ; I was one of them myself. God reward you for your labours, they say ! But what sort of a God is it that lets us rot away in misery ? That mocks us with his " blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." The God of love and pity and charity bazaars ! When I slink by their lighted halls and see them revelling within, I think I see their God crowned among them, scattering confetti. We are brutes . . . just brutes . . . for ever brutes.

(*The* WOMAN *collapses on a chair, sobbing.*)

FRIEDRICH (*after a pause*). Was your husband at the front ?

WOMAN. Yes, out there in the colonies. My bonny husband.

FRIEDRICH. Won't you bring him in?

WOMAN. Shall I? I tell you, you'll have a shock. It will put you off your work. He's not a pleasant sight, my husband. The disease eats deeper year by year. Still, if you really want to see him, sir. . . . He was the one that brought me to disease.

(*The* WOMAN *goes out, and returns leading her* HUSBAND *with his hurdy-gurdy. His face is a mass of sores.*)

Say good day to the gentleman.

HUSBAND (*stammering*). God . . . be . . . with you.

(FRIEDRICH *looks at him steadily, then begins to tremble.*)

FRIEDRICH. Is it really you, my friend? My poor, poor friend!

HUSBAND (*fearfully*). God . . . be . . . with you.

FRIEDRICH. You need not be afraid, poor fellow. It is I, Friedrich, Friedrich—we served in the same company, we marched across the endless, glowering desert together, we suffered thirst and hunger together. Don't you remember the fellow who volunteered to go on that tricky reconnaissance? We two, we together. We drew lots for the job, and I drew the longest straw. Now do you remember, my poor friend?

(HUSBAND *begins to cry miserably.*)

WOMAN. It's no good sir. It's no good talking to him. He remembers nothing now, nor ever will. He cries because he thinks he ought to cry. He can just think that much, but no more. The doctor said he'd soon have to help him out of life. Well, sir, now you've had your entertainment—can we go, sir?

(*The* WOMAN *leads out her* HUSBAND, *who is still miserably weeping.*)

FRIEDRICH. Madness, madness. Where? Where to go? Ahasuerus, where are you? I follow you, Ahasuerus; joyfully I follow you. Anything, anything to escape! A million shattered arms are stretched towards me. The agonizing cries of a million mothers echo in my ears. Where? Where? The unborn children whimper. The madmen cry. Oh, holy weeping! Speech defiled! Mankind defiled! . . . For our country's sake! Oh, God . . . can it really be? Can a country really ask this much of us? Or has our country sold its soul, sold it to the State? Sold it in a dirty business speculation? Perhaps the State is a pimp, and our country a whore to be sold for any brutal lust—blessed by that procuress, the Church! Can a Fatherland that asks so much really be divine? Can it be worth the sacrifice of a single soul? No, no, no! A thousand times no! Rather wander without rest, without hope, wander with you, Ahasuerus.

(*He throws himself upon the statue.*)

I shatter you to fragments, victory of the Fatherland!

(*He seizes a hammer and shatters the statue, then sinks down, an inanimate heap. After a time he rises again.*)

Now I must wander through the wilderness, without rest, without hope . . . I cannot, I am filled with loathing. Gabriele leaves her lover for a little plot of land . . . And I betray my Fatherland, the Fatherland in which I believed, to which I pledged myself, to which I dedicated my life-work—I betray my Fatherland for the sake of two poor, miserable beggars . . . No, not betray. I cannot go that way, I will not. It leads through nights of rain and storm, through plague-stricken streets ; it loses itself in the wilderness. Farewell, Gabriele !

(*He goes to the bureau and takes up a revolver. Through the open door his* SISTER *enters and regards him and the broken statue.*)

You come too late.

SISTER. I come in time.

FRIEDRICH. My path is blocked.

SISTER. Your path leads upwards.

FRIEDRICH. Back to my mother ?

SISTER. To her, yes ; but higher still.

FRIEDRICH. Back to my Fatherland ?

SISTER. To your land, yes ; but higher still.

FRIEDRICH. I can see no higher ; I am dazzled.

SISTER. I will shield your eyes ; then you will see. Your path leads to God.

FRIEDRICH. Haha ! To God ! God crowned among the revellers, scattering confetti !

SISTER. To God, who is spirit, love and strength;
To God who dwells in the heart of humanity.
Your path will lead you to humanity . . .

FRIEDRICH. To humanity . . .
I am not worthy.

SISTER. Soon like a mask you will cast aside
So much that now seems worthy in your eyes.
Who knows what in the end will prove
Your real worthiness ?
He who desires to join humanity
Must find it first within himself.
The path I bid you follow
Sinks to the depths and climbs the heights,
Leads you darkly through the underworld,
The underworld called criminal by fools.
But you are both accused and judge.

(FRIEDRICH *buries his face in his hands, then rises, staggers, stretches out his arms.*)

FRIEDRICH. Sunlight streams through me,
Freedom and sunlight.

My eyes have seen the path
And I will follow it.
Alone, and yet with you;
Alone and yet with all the world,
In the knowledge of humanity.

CURTAIN

FIFTH STATION

Scene VIII

Bedroom of a city tenement. In the two beds, the Woman, *the* Children, *the* Lodger (*with* Friedrich's *features*).

The Lodger (*to the* Daughter). I can't bear it.
We sleep with moans on every side, and cries.
I can't bear it any more.
Come, and I'll hold you to me
And turn you inside out
Like a soft woolly cap.
Daughter. Stay here . . . I won't leave you.
She's groaned like this at night
Ever since we had the news
That he'd been crushed to death at work.
Then, of course, the eleventh child
Which she was carrying at the time
She brought out dead.
A bit of luck that was.
I should have had to wash the kid myself.
No one will have her as a waitress now
Because she'll sing and dance
Like someone mad
In the middle of her work,
And offer prayers and hymns . . .
She's always at the bottle now.
Who is there now to keep the kids?
. . . There's only me.
And that means overtime at the works.
Stay here, and I'll do everything you ask.
Lodger. All right; I'll stay.
I think she keeps me here
Moaning and crying in the night—
Doesn't she mind you being a whore?
Daughter. She used to nod her head
When the other lodger beat me . . .
Does that make you cross with me?
Lodger. Cross with you, fool?
What else could you have done?
If he forced you?
It's only her that gets on my nerves.

Suddenly when you're in my arms
She shrieks or groans.

DAUGHTER. I almost envy the children.
They sleep all day from hunger
And all night from dirt and weariness.
They'd really have been better off
Brought up in the orphanage.

LODGER. That's not right . . .

DAUGHTER. No, no—I only thought of it.

LODGER. She nods when a blackguard beats her daughter
And shrieks and groans
When her daughter hugs me to her.
What was that you said . . . the orphanage . . .
The orphanage . . . The orphanage . . .

(*Darkness descends on the room.*)

LODGER (*dreaming*). The orphanage . . . the orphanage . . .

(*Silence.*)

(*Dreaming.*) Now she will shriek no more,
Groan no more . . .
Now are you content?
Now you are in the orphanage . . .
The orphanage . . .

(*The* NIGHT VISITOR *enters, his death's head thickly veiled.*)

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Lodger, get up.
It's time for work.

LODGER. All right, I'm coming.

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Make haste . . .

LODGER. Where are you taking me?

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Don't ask me where, just come.
You are in good hands.

Phosphorescence flickers round the NIGHT VISITOR *and the* LODGER, *who stands there in his workman's blouse. The* NIGHT VISITOR *takes his arm.*

Can you see the house?

LODGER. There, over there, I see it glimmering.
It's funny—are you taking me
The proper way?

THE NIGHT VISITOR. I am taking you the right way—
The narrow way!
The only way!

LODGER. That's not the factory.

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Use your eyes, look, look!
What is it then?

LODGER. It looks like a prison . . .
Look at the shining roof—
It's thick with gold!
THE NIGHT VISITOR. Right! Right!
What do you see now?
LODGER. High walls with iron spikes.
And in the walls
Holes barred with steel.
THE NIGHT VISITOR. Right, right!
LODGER. No, that's not the factory
That's a prison!
Let go—Let me go to work!
THE NIGHT VISITOR (*grips him firmly*). I'll take you to your work,
The only work you and your like are fit for.
Take off your spectacles of everyday
And learn to see things as they really are!
You thought this was a prison?
Well, look, look!
We are here.
Look at the name above the gates!
You're trembling—let me read it for you:
You see I've not betrayed you:
The great factory!

Darkness.

(*Then for a few moments the roar of machinery, the pounding of pistons, the whirring of wheels and the hissing of molten metal and steam.*)

SCENE IX

Death and Resurrection. The ground floor of a prison (the great factory). In the corridors are triple-bolted cell-doors. The spiral stairways leading to the upper floors have rectangular openings to allow the whole prison to be overlooked. On the cement floor, at the bottom of the staircase, a PRISONER *lies (with* FRIEDRICH'S *features), his head flung back, his arms flung out as though he were crucified.* JUDGES *in black coats hurry by: their heads are skulls.*

JUDGES (*fiercely*). Get at the facts of the case! The facts of the case!

(PRISONER *cries out shrilly.*)

WARDER. It wasn't my fault;
I was just taking him downstairs,
Like you said,
To see his wife,—you gave permission.

(WARDER *and* CHIEF WARDER *hurry over to the* PRISONER, *bend over him and raise his head.*)

CHIEF WARDER. He is still breathing.
WARDER. I knew he was a godless man,
I always knew it.
He wished another dead;
He murdered him in all his dreams.
And now he's killed himself;
Broken the Church's holiest command
Twice over.
CHIEF WARDER. He meant to kill himself, so who are we to stop him?
JUDGES (*scornfully*). Get at the facts of the case! The facts of the case!

(PRISONER *cries out accusingly.*)

WARDER. So help me God . . .
It wasn't like a human voice at all!
CHIEF WARDER. It was the devil himself!

(PRISONER *shrieks in accusation, and the doors of the cells burst open. In the open doorways stand the* PRISONERS, *their arms limp and swinging loosely. They raise their eyes in rapture.*)

PRISONER (*first softly, then with increasing resonance*). Horror lies within these prison walls—
Unplumbed, unfathomed; a bottomless morass,
An endless swamp,
A silent swamp.
In the long, empty twilight hours
White maggots crawled out from the iron bars.
I did my best to ward them off, I struggled . . .
It was no use.
Grey maggots gnawed into my flesh.
PRISONERS. Hear us! In suffering we are united.
Behind these prison walls damp horror lies concealed,
Unplumbed, unfathomed; bottomless morass.
PRISONER. Once I saw red flowers;
I stretched my hand to grasp them,
Found it was my heart.
And as I held it dumbly in my hand
It was devoured by maggots, grey and blind.
I ate with them.
PRISONERS. Hear us! In suffering we are united.
Once we saw red flowers.
How sweet they seemed, red flowers;
They were our hearts.

And as we held them dumbly
They were devoured by maggots, grey and blind.
We ate with them.

PRISONER. I looked down through the shaft;
I saw land there, I saw firm land.

CHIEF WARDER. And there your wife was waiting.

PRISONER. And there my wife was waiting . . .

WARDER. You broke the Church's holiest command—
Repent before you die!

PRISONER. What do you know about it, brother?
It is so far beyond all good and evil,
Repentance, heavenly recompense.
I heard a voice; it said:—
All, all deluded;
He was not nailed upon the Cross by men,
He crucified Himself.

PRISONERS. We too know that . . .
We knew it long ago.
He crucified Himself.

CHIEF WARDER. Think for a moment of your wife.
It's I who have to break the news to her,
A nice job too!
After all, I suppose my job
Is looking after people.

PRISONER. I'm thinking of my wife.
I'm thinking of my child as well,
Which she is bearing towards the light
In a body racked with pain.
My child . . .
Sum total of my guilt,
My guilt which never dies.
Ourselves we go
Slowly and painfully upon our way
And send out little children
To crucifixion.

(*A pregnant* WOMAN *rushes in through a door in the background, cries out, and throws herself down by the* PRISONER.)

WOMAN. Oh, why have you done this?
I was waiting for you . . .

PRISONER. The pain goes deep.
Someone is always waiting for us—
But we burn the last bridges,
And night comes down and blots out every path
Which leads to you.
Further we roam . . .
Knowing you are waiting . . .
And further still, and further . . .

Mocking we wander further . . .
Even though we ourselves are waiting.
WOMAN. The child . . .
Does your child mean so little?
PRISONER. It means so much . . .
Yet it was guilt towards my child
That cast me into the abyss, blasted,
Blasted since the day
When man first rose against his kind
And, hating, murdered man.
To children we
Are gods and saviours . . .
Helplessly we watch
The long road to the Cross.
WARDER. Blasphemer!
Holy Mother of God forgive him!
PRISONER. Impotent, impotent too, like all the rest,
With her lying offers of pardon.
She mourns for her son unceasingly;
In this alone
Is she innocent and pure.
WOMAN. What is there now for me in life . . .
I can only kill myself,
Myself and my child . . .
What else is there left for me?
What else?
PRISONER. What else?
Come close and I'll tell you.
Perhaps through crucifixion only
Liberation comes;
Perhaps the powers of light
Spring only from His blood.
Perhaps through crucifixion only
Can redemption come,
The way to light and freedom.
PRISONERS. Brother, you light the way.
Through crucifixion only
Shall we liberate ourselves.
Through crucifixion only
Shall we find redemption,
And the way to light and freedom.
PRISONER. Woman . . . Mother . . .

(*He dies.*)

CHIEF WARDER. Come. He is redeemed.
WARDER. Burdened as he was with sin . . .
PRISONERS. From sin he has released himself,
Too weak to find redemption . . .

WOMAN (*crying out*). Husband . . . ! (*She wrings her hands in lamentation.*)

CHIEF WARDER. Come.

WOMAN. I cannot come . . .
My child . . .
My child . . .

(*There is a silence interrupted by soft music. Then the* PRISONERS *leave their cells, forming a semicircle round the* WOMAN. *The sun shines on them all.*)

PRISONER (*a woman*). A child.
How many, many years have passed
Since last we heard the laughter of a child . . .
How many, many years have passed
Since last we played with children. . . .

(*The* PRISONERS *stand looking at the* WOMAN *full of awe. She holds the child out to them, her face distorted with pain, yet transfigured. The prison roof gives place to the limitless sky.*)

Darkness.

SCENE X

The stage is hidden by thick mist. A country-road is visible. The WANDERER (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*) *appears.*

THE WANDERER. I feel to-day as though
This were a new awakening.
As though the grave had split asunder
And shown the sky again.
The earth-chained vessel breaks.
Judge is now prisoner,
And prisoner judge ;
And both stretch out their hands,
Casting aside their triumphs and their shames
Like crowns of thorns.
The morning breaks.
The mist dissolves.
I know my work.
I know it now.

SCENE XI

A large meeting-room decorated with coloured paper flowers, and with sentimental paintings of war on the walls.

CHAIRMAN. I call upon our gallant old friend.

(*An* OLD MAN, *an Anti-Pacifist, mounts the dais.*)

OLD MAN. Ah yes, those were indeed the days! The days when our victorious comrades swept conquering forward while the enemy ran before us like a lot of sheep; the days when a great cry ran through the land—"My Country!"

(FRIEDRICH *enters.*)

Those were indeed the days! The great days! Magnificent days! Now you're whimpering for bread. What's the significance of a loaf of bread? If you want work, get it! And what does it matter whether you feed on potatoes or roast meat?

(*The crowd murmurs.*)

Have you so soon forgotten the great deeds that were done in the name of our Fatherland, the blood that our heroes shed?

A CRY. Are we any the less heroes because we happen to be still alive?

(*The* OLD MAN *leaves the dais.*)

CHAIRMAN. I call upon the Professor.

PROFESSOR (*on the dais*). As the chosen representative of that Science which is proud to be the servant of our State to-day, of that Science which is ultimate truth and final knowledge—as the chosen representative of Science, I should like to pick a bone with the honourable gentleman who preceded me. The cause of your distress is not bread, nor the lack of it; neither bread nor science nor culture. Go, gentlemen, and study the laws of causality, try to grasp the law of association in regard to all phenomena. . . . The Science in whose ranks I have the honour to serve is inspired by a holy devotion. It is here to help our glorious State, to account for it as a complete ethical organism.

(*Threatening murmurs from the crowd. The* PROFESSOR *leaves the platform.*)

CHAIRMAN. I call upon his Reverence.

PRIEST. Brothers in Christ, heed my words. As our Saviour once said to His disciples, "I am not come to bring you peace, but a sword," so I am come to bring you not soothing rhetoric but iron truth. In time of war did I not preach and say unto you: "Annihilate the enemy, choke him with poison gas and shatter him with bombs, destroy him ruthlessly with submarine and blockade. All that you do finds favour in the eyes of God!" For the Lord of Hosts was with you, and an angel strode before you and withered the ranks of the enemy. . . . Think of those bygone days of glory and forget your petty cares. Think on Him Who died for you upon the Cross.

CROWD. Away with the clergy!

Down with the rich!

We are hungry, hungry, hungry!

CHAIRMAN (*striking a bell*). I call upon the Agitator.

AGITATOR. You are right, brothers! What do the old fire-eaters

mean to us ? Or the professors ? Or the priests ? Christ has become the rich man's God. We don't need Him any more, you and I. What we need is bread. What we need is money. We've got to fight against stupidity, we've got to set up reason in its place—and by we I mean you, the people. But first let's have a look at what these fellows have just been saying : " State " is a new name for Fatherland ; that's what they said, and it's a lie. That's a conception that has nothing but a few thousand square miles of earth as its foundation. A few languages, one of which is permitted while the others are suppressed. And any amount of notices saying " Forbidden." They'd like to say, " Permitted the rich, forbidden the poor." That's what they'd say if they had the courage. And then there's taxes : let the rich down lightly and pile it on for the poor. That's their motto. When the rich find they haven't castles enough and want new villas on the Riviera they say damn it all, we'd better have a war. Sit down at that 'phone at once and set a few dozen lies going so that someone will have to declare war on somebody. Start up a society to care for the wounded—a few more or less don't matter—and get a few war memorials designed while you're about it. . . . Now for the Church and the Priests—shall we have a word about them too ?

CROWD. Down with the clergy !

AGITATOR. I thought as much. Well, and what then ? What but exalt the healthy reason, as typified in you, the people ? That means bread and decency and work and our rights. And what must we do ? Simply overthrow stupidity. That's what we've got to do. Break up the mansions of the rich ! Oh, I can see you at it ! All your pent-up energy released, fighting gloriously at last ! Holding aloft the flag of freedom ! Woman embracing you with feverish arms ! Masses surging ! Shots ringing out ! I'll write you pamphlets to guide you and verses to inspire you, verses which shall themselves be bloody deeds ! My words shall go with you like the martial blare of trumpets ! Blood flows ! The blood of freedom ! March ! March !

CROWD. Yes, this time we'll march !
We're hungry, hungry !
This time we'll really fight !
Bread ! Bread ! Bread !

CHAIRMAN (*violently ringing his bell*). Here is someone called Friedrich who wishes to address you.

(FRIEDRICH *presses through the crowd and mounts the dais.*)

FRIEDRICH. Gently, brothers, gently ! I know you need bread. I know poverty is eating at your bodies. I know your misery, your wretched, stinking hovels. I know oppression and the look in the eyes of the outcast. I know, too, of your hated. But in spite of all that I beg you to restrain yourselves, for I love you.

CROWD. Let's listen to him.
He's right.
He loves us.

FRIEDRICH. I understand your deep disgust of men who bring dishonour to the name of God. I understand it indeed. But let me warn you against the words of him who called on you to march on the rich, against the glittering half-truths of his words! His reasoning did not go very deep. Can't you see the man for what he is? This opportunist agitator? Yesterday his talk was all of individualism, to-day he cries: "God is the people!" And to-morrow he will cry: "God is the Machine!" Therefore the people are machines. None the less he will delight in the swinging pistons and the whirling wheels, the smashing hammers. For him the people are the masses: he knows nothing of the people as men and women. Have no faith in him, for he has no faith in humanity. And before you set out upon your great march you must have faith in humanity. It is better for you to suffer want than to follow the precepts of this man without faith.

PEOPLE. He asks us to suffer want!
Down with him!
Down with him!
We must march! March!
We are hungry!
Hear him out first!
Just hear him out!

FRIEDRICH. I am not speaking now of material want, my friends. It is not right that you should suffer hunger. I wish you bodily comfort and spiritual want. I wish you this in the name of the love that unites us all. You must no longer starve. You must be rich, you must find your life's fulfilment. I will fight side by side with you against poverty and misery . . . but wait one day longer, wait until midday. Come to the market-place and let me speak with you there.

(*Excited uproar.*)

A WORKMAN. Well, we've gone hungry so long now that one more day can't make much difference.

PEOPLE. Yes, we will wait!
No, no more waiting! March!
We are hungry!
Hungry!
Let us wait!
Wait!
Let us wait!

(*The crowd goes out. A few young people remain behind. A* STUDENT *approaches* FRIEDRICH.)

STUDENT. What is the good of learning when the spirit is denied? What is the good of reason when we must suffer in its name? You must be our leader.

FRIEDRICH. We must advance together, side by side.

(*A* GIRL STUDENT *approaches* FRIEDRICH.)

THE GIRL. In the name of love, be our leader. Once more humanity must be vitalized by love. We will bear no more children until love encircles us with radiant hands. Lead us!

FRIEDRICH. Now down the arches of the years I see
The great cathedral of mankind arise;
Through doors flung wide
The youth of every nation marches singing
Towards a crystal shrine.
Dreams dazzle me—
No misery, no war, no hatred left on earth,
And mothers garlanding bright girls and boys
For games of joy and dances of increase.
Stride on, oh youth, stride on, oh fruitful youth,
Fruitful eternally amidst a barren world;
Within your breast
You bear the life divine.

(*The young people, hand in hand, leave the room in twos and threes. The room is now half in darkness. As* FRIEDRICH *turns to go the* GIRL *suddenly appears out of the darkness.*)

THE GIRL. My lips are parted with desire. My heart is consumed with glowing passion. . . . I will serve you, I alone. . . . Leave the others. . . . They only understand force—and even if your force is for the good. . . . I must serve you.

FRIEDRICH. Serve the spirit, serve your God.

THE GIRL. I shudder before him; He is coldness and death.

FRIEDRICH. Say rather passionate warmth!

THE GIRL. I shrink before him. But you . . . you I love. . . . To you I offer myself; embrace me. Take me . . . my burning breast. . . . My womb cries out for you . . . I ache for your embrace. . . . Give me a child. . . .

FRIEDRICH. I do not want your breast nor your embrace. Has the whole world rights over my body?

(*With bowed head the* GIRL *goes slowly out.*)

Wretched woman! Unredeemed.

(*A* MAN *with turned-up coat collar rushes into the room.*)

THE MAN. I hate you.

FRIEDRICH. I call you brother.

THE MAN. I hate you. I know you; don't think I've not recognized you. I've seen you in my room on lonely nights. Why don't you turn monk? Leave us in peace! What do you want with the mob? You desecrate God!

FRIEDRICH. I celebrate Him.

THE MAN (*hurrying away*). I hate you!

FRIEDRICH. Brother, you betray yourself.

CURTAIN

SIXTH STATION

Scene XII

A precipitous rock-face leading to a narrow ledge. Two men are climbing the rock.

Second Climber (*with the* Friend's *features*). Stop, stop!
I shall fall,
I am giddy.
First Climber (*with* Friedrich's *features*). Come, pull yourself together;
It is not far now.
Second Climber. The ledge is narrow;
We shall slip and fall
Down, down into the abyss.
First Climber. Perhaps, but courage! Courage!
The ledge to which we climb
Rewards all danger with stupendous height,
With air brighter than light, clearer than fire.
Second Climber. In the name of friendship, stop!
An icy coldness sweeps down from above.
First Climber. It is the glacier,
Dazzling and remote.
Second Climber. The silence there
Oppresses heart and mind.
First Climber. You're hearing ghosts.
Fasten the rope about you.
Second Climber. I would have thanked you once
For freeing me from lowly tyrannies.
But now you lead me on
From terror to worse terror.
First Climber. Not everyone released
Is really free.
Second Climber. Up there no one will hear you.
First Climber. The mighty walls of rock rejoice to hear
The sound of shouting voices,
And echo them in joyful repetition.
Second Climber. I'll go no further . . .
First Climber. Then I must go alone.
Second Climber. You'll leave me here,
Your old companion?
First Climber. It is not I who leave you.

SECOND CLIMBER. In the name of friendship, stay!
FIRST CLIMBER. In the name of friendship (*he climbs rapidly higher*)
I must go!
SECOND CLIMBER. Can you still hear me call?
Think of the days when we were young together!
FIRST CLIMBER. Your voice is like the scree
That breaks away and plunges
Loosely down the mountain-side.
Youth advances with me.
How easily youth climbs!
SECOND CLIMBER. You go too far—
Take care, take care;
I am afraid for you.
FIRST CLIMBER. Myself I cannot leave
So I leave you. (*Almost at the summit*). . . .
Farewell!

Darkness.

SCENE XIII

Square in front of the Church. FRIEDRICH *enters and leans against the archway of the door.*

FRIEDRICH. The sunlight warms the roofs and strokes the blinded windows of the narrow attics. My breast expands.

(*His* MOTHER *comes across the square dressed in mourning.*)

Mother!

MOTHER (*scarcely glancing up*). All these years you've never come, till I began to believe I carried you once more beneath my heart.

FRIEDRICH. I bring you all my love; let me hold you gently in my arms and kiss your tired and wrinkled face.

MOTHER. You are dead for me! You left your family and estranged your people.

FRIEDRICH. I am nearer to them now than ever I was before.

MOTHER. You belong to the others.

FRIEDRICH. To the others, yes, but to you as well.

MOTHER. Nobody can belong to us and to the others. We are a proud people.

FRIEDRICH. Mother! Don't you feel the earth as a single mighty womb quivering in travail? Think of the torture you suffered in bearing me—thus is the world convulsed to-day . . . a lacerated bleeding womb, bearing all humanity anew.

MOTHER. I am too old, my life is nearly done. I don't understand you.

FRIEDRICH (*covers his face with his hands*). Mother!

(*His* MOTHER *goes. His* UNCLE *enters.*)

Dear Uncle!

UNCLE. What does this mean? What do you want?—I warn you not to count on me. I refuse to acknowledge you.

FRIEDRICH. I don't want money, Uncle; but I do want you to acknowledge me.

UNCLE. Wait a minute, wait a minute! Do you mean to tell me that you've earned enough to keep yourself? No, your coat is shabby; you can't hide that from me.

FRIEDRICH. You delude yourself, Uncle.

UNCLE. Delude myself? Well, if I do it's only because you force me to. You brought my business to the verge of ruin. "His nephew's an enemy of our people"—that's what they all said. You brought misfortune to your whole family.

FRIEDRICH. If I did it was only because there was no escaping it.

UNCLE. Your presence is distasteful. You are really impossible.

FRIEDRICH. Uncle, I struggle with you because I must. But it is not against you that I am fighting; it is against the dark walls and barriers built up round the real you.

UNCLE. I knew it, you traitor! You even dare attack your own flesh and blood!

FRIEDRICH. I did that long ago, Uncle.

(*The* UNCLE *walks on. The* DOCTOR *enters.*)

Good morning, doctor—remember me still?

DOCTOR. Ah . . . you . . . Oh yes, very ordinary little case—debility of the rectum. How is it now? All right now? Digestion good?

FRIEDRICH. Tell me, doctor; do you believe in humanity?

DOCTOR. What a damn-fool question! Believe in humanity! I believe that most people have a good digestion, and those who have not should be given a dose of castor oil—one tablespoonful for adults, one teaspoonful for children. Stupid question. Really quite simple-minded. A man who can ask that wants looking into. . . . Stand still. . . . Say Ah. . . . Close your eyes. . . . Highly developed psychosis. . . .

FRIEDRICH. Your medicines will never make people healthy.

DOCTOR. You must come and see me at once. To-day. I have just bought a nice sanitorium. A water-cure might do the trick even now. But come at once, and don't count on anything. Typical everyday case. Report this afternoon. Room seventeen.

(*He hurries off. A* SICK MAN *with restless eyes shuffles in.*)

SICK MAN. Well, I must say you really seem to believe in it.

FRIEDRICH. In what?

SICK MAN. In yourself, and in humanity generally.

FRIEDRICH. I believe in humanity, certainly.

SICK MAN. He he! . . . And in love as well

FRIEDRICH. I cannot live without love.

SICK MAN. And all that for the sake of . . .

FRIEDRICH. . . . liberating humanity.

SICK MAN. I see—you are not interested in building public lavatories, then? A pity—a great pity. Let me tell you something, my dear sir. For a long time I myself tried to redeem the world with love . . . But it's no good. The only thing to do is to build new lavatories. The one's we are used to are always too dark, and hidden away. . . . I know what you're thinking—what on earth is behind all this? I'll tell you—simply to teach humanity that the only infallible panacea for all its ills is universal suicide. It's no good trying to cure them with love—I've tried it and I know. . . . So now I'm building lavatories.

FRIEDRICH. Have you put your plans before the doctors?

SICK MAN. Oh yes, I've been to see them about it several times already. But they didn't want my plans—said they'd thought of it themselves already.

FRIEDRICH. And you would really like all men to kill themselves?

SICK MAN. Yes!

FRIEDRICH. Why don't you go about preaching war, then?

SICK MAN. Oh no, they mustn't do it that way. They must kill themselves voluntarily. . . . Well, what about it? I advise you to think it over very carefully. The building of lavatories with an eye to self-annihilation.

FRIEDRICH. Poor fellow!

SICK MAN. You pity me! *You* . . . pity . . . me . . .

FRIEDRICH. You are sick, corrupted with disease.

SICK MAN (*as though suddenly awakened*). I can't believe in love! I can't, I tell you . . . only whores . . . only whores. . . . No one has ever loved me.

(*Shaking his head he hurries off.*)

FRIEDRICH. I must seek him out—to-day. . . . I'll ask my mother to look after him . . . no . . . that girl who came to me.

(*A* WOMAN *who has entered during the foregoing scene moves nearer with studied provocation.*)

WOMAN. What do you think you're doing? . . . Can't you see that love and goodness are eternally separated by a hopeless gulf? That love crouches ready to spring like a rabid dog licking lascivious lips? That love and goodness glare into each other's eyes like deadly enemies? . . . Ha ha! . . . You're on the wrong track this time, my young friend! Don't answer me. Your answer is nonsense. Your goodness is nonsense. . . . Love lashes the body. . . . Let me tear at your breast with my teeth until the blood flows, red blood over white teeth; let me kiss your thighs. . . . Your goodness! . . . You are a fool, a miserable, wretched fool. You and your goodness—you suffocate me!

FRIEDRICH. And you? Who are you?

WOMAN. Woman!

(*She goes.* FRIEDRICH *leans silently against the doorway of the Church. His* SISTER *enters.*)

SISTER. There was a light in your eyes, Friedrich.

FRIEDRICH. Dear friend.

SISTER. What will you do, Friedrich? How shall you symbolize humanity's victory this time?

FRIEDRICH. No special symbol is needed for that, no proof. Humanity can see victory in its heart, can see it in all my work.

SISTER. And you will stay here?

FRIEDRICH. I shall stay here, and yet still be going further on my way. Through pestilential streets and fields of poppies, over sunlit, snowy mountain peaks and through the barren wilderness—knowing all the time that I am not uprooted, knowing that I am rooted in myself.

SISTER. One must die and be born again to find one's roots.

FRIEDRICH. But that knowledge is only a beginning.

SISTER. And whither does it point?

FRIEDRICH. Towards humanity.

SISTER. And beyond humanity?

FRIEDRICH. Beyond . . . ? I can't think of that yet. I feel as though I'm dwelling in limitless space. It is glorious to know that one may be anchored and yet still wander.

SISTER. Good-bye, Friedrich. I shall watch your journeyings.

(*She goes. People stream out of the Church and others join them in the square from all the side streets.*)

CROWD. That's him, the one that's going to speak—
He said we must wait until midday.
Now he will have to speak,
Since we have waited.

FRIEDRICH. Brothers, sisters; there is not a single one of you of whom I have ever heard, yet I know you all.

You, my child, go every day to school; you go in fear. In the schoolroom the day is overcast and dark, yet outside the sun is shining. The teacher sits at his desk like one of those evil spirits in the fairy-tales you read in secret. He glares at you and scolds you because you haven't done your homework. And yet your heart is full of strange experiences. You would gladly talk to him about them, but he talks you down and accuses you of not having learnt the Scriptures and of not being a good Christian.

And you, slim and delicate in your maidenhood; you too I know . . . Only a few weeks ago you left school with joy in your heart; it seemed that youth and freedom beckoned you with heavenly bells . . . And now you stand at the factory bench. Day in, day out, you push a single lever backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards. Always the same lever. And your breath becomes heavy in the stifling

atmosphere, and your eyes fill with tears when you think of the sunlight grimed by the dusty windows, of freedom and youth and flowers.

And I know you too, woman, careworn and worked to the bone; I know how you live in your wretched garret with your hungry, shivering children; how at evening you open the door to your husband with a spirit dulled and a body tired to death.

And you, husband, I know you too; how you are filled with horror at the very prospect of returning home to that room with its evil smell, its squalid misery, its festering disease. I know how you hate those who gorge themselves at your expense and then sneer at you if you go to the inn to drink yourself insensible; insensible, that you may think no more and see no more.

And you, young girl,—I know of your nights of hot desire.

And you, young man,—I know of your restless seeking after God.

And you, rich man, for ever heaping gold on gold, despising everyone —yourself and others too.

And you, woman, a tree heavy-laden with rare fruit which no one comes to pluck, so that you break and wither in your superfluity.

And you, soldier, pinched in your coloured coat which drains all joy from life. I know your astonished eyes when you see before you the figure of striding youth.

How could the artist symbolize this youth?
Because he exists, he really is.
And so it is with all of you,
Distorted images of true humanity!
Gasping for breath, joyless, embittered—
All because you have buried alive the spirit . . .
Mighty engines thunder day and night,
A million spades are ceaselessly at work
Piling still more rubble on the spirit's grave.

Your hearts are dry and withered. The hearts of your fellow-men you regard as convenient bell-pulls which you can tug at when you feel inclined. You throw glittering gold-pieces at their feet and say they are spring-awakened birds flying rejoicing through the air You pave your streets with gold-pieces and tell yourselves that you are treading rich green fields enamelled with wild flowers.

Your lips shape barren laws, iron prison houses gnawed with rust.

Your hands raise walls around you, and you say, beyond them is the jungle.

You sow hatred in the hearts of your children, for you know no more of love.

You have carved the figure of Christ in wood and nailed it to a wooden cross, because you yourselves refuse to go the way of crucifixion which alone can bring redemption.

You build castles and prisons and set men to rule over them, men who serve neither God nor humanity but a phantom, an evil phantom.

For the mothers and their children you raise cruel and subtle pillories —for you well understand the art of torture.

You mothers who bear children, and from indifference or false pride sacrifice them to frivolous lies and illusions—you are no longer mothers.

You are all of you, all of you, no longer men and women ; you are distorted images of your real selves.

And yet you could still be men and women, still be human, if only you had faith in yourselves and in humanity, if only you would grant the spirit its fulfilment.

You could stride erect where to-day you creep along crooked and bent.

Your eyes could be filled with the light of joy, while to-day you are half blind.

You could go forward with winged feet, while to-day wherever you go you trail after you iron chains.

Oh, if only you were men and women—men and women unqualified —free men and women !

(*During this long speech there has been ever-increasing disturbance among the crowd. Some have kneeled down. Others, weeping, bury their heads in their hands. Some lie broken on the ground. These now rise again in gladness ; others open wide their arms to heaven. A* YOUTH *rushes forward.*)

YOUTH. To think that we ever forgot ! We are men, men and women !

SEVERAL WOMEN AND GIRLS (*half-aloud*). We are men and women !

ALL. We are men and women ! (*Softly, as though smiling to themselves.*) We are men and women !

(*There is a silence.*)

FRIEDRICH. Now, brothers, now I bid you march ! March now in the light of day ! Go to your rulers and proclaim to them with the organ tones of a million voices that their power is but illusion. Go to the soldiers and tell them to beat their swords into ploughshares. Go to the rich and show them your heart, your heart that was once buried alive beneath their rubbish. Yet be kind to them, for they too are poor, poor and straying. But the castles—these you must destroy ; destroy them laughing, the false castles of illusion. Now march ! March forward in the light of day.

Brothers, stretch out your tortured hands,
With cries of radiant, ringing joy !
Stride freely through our liberated land
With cries of Revolution, Revolution !

(*All the people are now standing with outstretched hands. Then they join hands and march away.*)

ALL. Brothers, stretch out your tortured hands
With cries of radiant, ringing joy!
Stride freely through our liberated land
With cries of Revolution, Revolution!

CURTAIN

MASSES AND MAN

A Fragment of the Social Revolution of the Twentieth Century, translated by Vera Mendel

WORLD-REVOLUTION :
MOTHER OF NEW
POWER AND RHYTHM,
MOTHER OF NEW
PEOPLES AND PATTERNS,
RED FLAMES THE CENTURY IN BLOOD OF EXPIATION :
THE EARTH NAILS ITSELF
TO THE CROSS

TO THE WORKERS

THE AUTHOR TO THE PRODUCER, OCTOBER, 1921

CERTAIN critics have deplored the fact that your production of this play weakens its contrasting elements of reality and dream by wrapping the picture of "reality" in the same visionary atmosphere as that which rightly surrounds the "dream pictures." I want to tell you myself that you have carried out my meaning. These pictures of "reality" are not realism, are not local colour; the protagonists (except for Sonia) are not individual characters. Such a play can only have a spiritual, never a concrete, reality.

In my political capacity, I proceed upon the assumption that units, groups, representatives of various social forces, various economic functions, have a real existence; that certain relations between human beings are objective realities. As an artist, I recognize that the validity of these "facts" is highly questionable. ("It further remains to be determined whether we exist as individuals.")

I see convicts in the prison yard, sawing wood with a monotonous rhythm. In sympathy, I think: these are men. This one may be a workman, the next a farmer, the next a clerk . . . I see the room in which the workman lived, his little peculiarities, the characteristic gestures with which he threw away a match, or kissed a woman, or came out of the factory gates in the evening. I see the broad-backed farmer and the narrow-chested little clerk just as clearly. Then—suddenly—they are no longer human beings, X and Y and Z, but dreadful puppets dimly aware of the compelling fate that governs them.

Two women once walked past the window of my cell, while I was clinging to the iron bars. Apparently two old maids. Both had short white hair and dresses identical in shape, colour and cut; both carried grey umbrellas with white dots and both waggled their heads.

Not for one moment did I see these as "realistic human beings" going for a walk in the narrow prison lane of a "realistic" Neuburg. It was a dance of death by two old maids, one old maid and her mirrored death, that stared me in the face.

"Masses and Man," considered as a whole, is the presentation of such visionary insight. It literally broke out of me and was put on paper in two days and a half. The two nights, which, owing to my imprisonment, I was forced to spend in "bed" in a dark cell, were abysses of torment. My mind was tortured with visions of faces, daimonic faces, faces tumbling over each other in grotesque somersaults. In the mornings, shivering with fever, I sat down to write and did not stop until my fingers, clammy and trembling, refused to serve me.

No one was allowed into my cell even to clean it ; I turned with uncontrollable rage against any comrade who asked questions or wanted to help me.

The laborious and blissful work of pruning and remoulding lasted a year.

To-day I can look at the play critically. I recognize that its literary form was conditioned by the inward constraint of those days. Such raw confession violated my personal privacy and made it difficult to shape my own experience to æsthetic ends at a time when the clear objectivity of art was as yet impossible. The immensity of the days of revolution had not yet formed an ordered mental picture ; it still lived on in me as a kind of torturing spiritual chaos.

I am surprised at the critics' lack of understanding. Possibly the play is insufficiently worked out. But, in any case, those ideas which, to us, who live close to the workers and understand and express their spiritual values, are a moving, rending, all-absorbing human experience, are nothing more than catchwords and newspaper phrases to " bourgeois " critics. Bourgeois society, and the art which reflects it, sees only idle wrangling about abstractions in a theme which, to the working classes, represents most tragic and shattering conflicts. The proletarian, on the other hand, is quite unmoved by the " profound " and " significant " expression of the spiritual experiences of the middle classes.

I need not dwell on the fact that proletarian art must ultimately rest on universal human interests, must, at its deepest, like life or death, embrace all human themes. It can only exist where the creative artist reveals that which is eternally human in the spiritual characteristics of the working people.

ERNST TOLLER.

FESTUNG NIEDERSCHŒNENFELD.
October, 1921.

This play was first put on paper in October, 1919, the first year of the German revolution, in the prison-fortress of Niederschœnenfeld.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Working Men and Women
The Woman (Sonia)
Her Husband (a State Official)
The Nameless One
An Officer
A Priest
Two Girl Prisoners

In Sonia's dream pictures :

Sonia
The Guide

The State Official
Bankers
The People's Sentries
The Nameless One
Prisoners
Shadows

The second, fourth and sixth scenes are dream pictures ; the first, third, fifth and seventh are visionary abstracts of reality.

Translator's Note

The stage directions in square brackets, which I have supplied in a few places where the text does not immediately explain itself, are based on the original Berlin production.

MASSES AND MAN

FIRST PICTURE

SCENE.—*The back room of a workmen's tavern is indicated. In the middle a clumsy table. A* WOMAN *and some* WORKMEN *sit around it.*

FIRST WORKMAN. Pamphlets have been distributed :
We assemble in the large hall.
Early to-morrow the factories will close,
The masses are in ferment,
To-morrow will decide.
(*To the* WOMAN) Comrade, are you ready ?

THE WOMAN. I am ready.
With every breath power grows in me.
How I have longed and waited for this hour,
When heart's blood turns to words
And words to action !
Often I have been stricken—
Clenched my hands with rage and shame and pain !
When the vile papers bawl of victory
A million hands take hold of me,
A million voices shriek :
You, you, are guilty of our death !
Yes, every horse whose flanks tremble and foam
Dumbly accuses me—accuses.
If I to-morrow sound the trumpet of the Judgment
And if my conscience surges through the hall—
It is not I who shall proclaim the strike ;
Mankind is calling, strike ! and Nature, strike !
I think the dog who leaps to greet me at my door
Barks, strike !
I think the flowing river hisses, strike !
My knowledge is so strong. The masses—
In resurrection, freed
From wordy snares woven by well-fed gentlemen—
Shall grow to be
The armies of humanity ;
And with a mighty gesture
Raise up the invisible citadel of peace . . .
Who bears the flag, the red flag,
Flag of beginnings ?

SECOND WORKMAN. You. They follow you.

(*Silence flickers.*)

THE WOMAN. If only all our agents keep the secret!
You think that the police know nothing?
But what if troops surround the hall?
FIRST WORKMAN. Whatever the police may know,
They do not know our final purpose.
Once that the masses fill the hall
They'll be a mighty flood which no police
Can shape to little splashing fountains.
Moreover the police are growing cautious;
No longer drunk with power, they waver.
The troops are with us—
There are Soldiers' Councils everywhere.
To-morrow is decisive, comrade.

(*There is a knock at the door.*)

Betrayed!
SECOND WORKMAN. But they must not take *you*!
FIRST WORKMAN. Only one door!
SECOND WORKMAN. Go by the window.
FIRST WORKMAN. The window gives upon a light shaft.
THE WOMAN. So near the battle—

(*Louder knocking. The door opens. The* WOMAN'S HUSBAND *enters. His coat collar is turned up over his face. He looks round quickly and raises his bowler.*)

This is—a friend.
Nothing to be afraid of . . .
You come to me—
You find me.
THE HUSBAND. Good evening.
(*Softly*) Please do not introduce me,
But may I speak to you?
THE WOMAN. Comrades . . .
THE WORKMEN. Good night—
Until to-morrow!
THE WOMAN. Good night. Until to-morrow!

[*The* WORKMEN *go out.*]

THE HUSBAND. You realize
I do not come here as a helper.
THE WOMAN. Forgive my budding, momentary dream.
THE HUSBAND. Only your conduct, which dishonours me,
Forced me to come.
THE WOMAN. The honour of a citizen imperilled by my actions?
Strange!

Then has the vote been taken?
Does the majority
Threaten to oust you from its ranks?

THE HUSBAND. I beg you, do not jest.
For I obey considerations which you flout;
The code of gentlefolk
Is binding on me.

THE WOMAN. Stamping you and your like
To formulæ!

THE HUSBAND. Commanding our submission, our self-discipline . . .
You do not grasp my words.

THE WOMAN. I see your eyes.

THE HUSBAND. Do not confuse me.

THE WOMAN. You—you . . .

THE HUSBAND. To be brief,
I am about to limit your activities.

THE WOMAN. You . . .

THE HUSBAND. The urge you feel to help society
Can find an outlet in our circles.
For instance,
You could found homes for illegitimate children.
This is a reasonable field of action,
A witness to the gentle nurture which you scorn.
Even your so-called comrade-workmen
Despise unmarried mothers.

THE WOMAN. Go on, go on.

THE HUSBAND. You are not free to act.

THE WOMAN. I *am* free.

THE HUSBAND. I may expect some slight consideration,
Some tactfulness, if not some understanding.

THE WOMAN. I care for nothing
But the work we have to do.
I serve this work; and, understand me,
I *must* serve it.

THE HUSBAND. Let me dissect your motives:
The wish for wide activities
Governs your conduct.
I do not say the motives that determine
This wish are anything but noble.

THE WOMAN. How every word you utter hurts me . . .
You know the pictures of Madonnas
In peasant homes?
With hearts, sword-pierced, bleeding dark tears;
Those ugly, pious, tender pictures,
So simple-minded and so great . . .
You—you . . .
Can you talk of my ambitions?

What an abyss opens between us!
No idle wish has so transformed my fate;
It was the bare necessity,
The need stored in my deepest being,
The need to be a human creature.
Necessity—oh! understand—*necessity* transforms me—
Not mood, not occupation for an idle hour,
Need to be human, sways me.

THE HUSBAND. Need? And have you a right
To speak of need?

THE WOMAN. Oh let me be . . . my man,
I hold you, kiss your eyes.
You . . . speak no more.

THE HUSBAND. I would not willingly torment you—
This place—— Can we be overheard?

THE WOMAN. Although a comrade hear us—
They need no code of honour
To be considerate.
If only you could understand them, feel their need—
Which is *our* need—must be!
You have abased them;
And their humiliation
Dishonours you.
So you have written your own doom . . .
Hold back the pity in your eyes!
I am not sentimental or neurotic.
No, I belong to them because fine feelings
And wretched little hours appointed to good works
Can only soothe our vanity and weakness!
I tell you, there are comrades
Who blush for you—
Unless they laugh aloud,
As I laugh now!

THE HUSBAND. Then you must know the truth:
The secret service knows—
The authorities are watching you.
Wife, I have sworn allegiance to the State—
You cripple my career.

THE WOMAN. And so——?

THE HUSBAND. I tell you frankly
That I shall suffer for your actions;
Which, I assure you, touch my feelings also—
The more that you will harm the State
As well as my career—
For you support the enemy in our midst.
That gives me grounds for a divorce.

THE WOMAN. In that case—if I harm you—
If I am a hindrance on your path—

THE HUSBAND. There is still time.
THE WOMAN. In that case——
I am ready.
I bear the blame of my own actions.
You need not fear that the divorce will harm you.
You . . .
You . . . my arms reach for you
In my great need.
My blood is blossoming for you—
Without you I shall be a faded leaf.
You are the dew that causes my unfolding,
You are the mighty March wind throwing torches
Into my thirsty veins . . .
There have been nights and cries of budding boys
Rearing and prancing in the flush of youth.
Oh! carry me away into the fields, the parks, the alleys.
So humbly I will kiss your eyes . . .
I think I shall be weak without you,
Boundlessly weak . . .
Forgive me, *this* is weakness.
I see your case and you are justified.
For, look, to-morrow I shall stand before the masses,
To-morrow I shall speak.
I shall attack the State
To which you have sworn loyalty;
To-morrow
I shall tear down the mask
That hides grimacing murder.
THE HUSBAND. But this is treason
To the State!
THE WOMAN. Your State makes war,
Your State betrays the people,
Your State robs, squeezes and oppresses
The disinherited,
The people.
THE HUSBAND. The State is sacred, war saves it alive;
Peace is a phantom of neurotics
And war only a broken truce of arms.
War is the rule, the constant life of States,
Threatened, without, within, by enemies.
THE WOMAN. How can a body live
Eaten by pestilence and fire?
You have not seen the naked body politic—
The worms devouring it,
The private purses battening on human lives.
You have not seen . . . I know, you have sworn loyalty;
You do your duty and your conscience is at rest.
THE HUSBAND. Is this your last decision?

THE WOMAN. My last decision.
THE HUSBAND. Then—good night.
THE WOMAN. Good night.

(*As the* HUSBAND *is about to go.*)

May I go with you?
To-day for the last time . . .
Or am I shameless?
Or am I shameless—
Shameless to my last drop of blood?

(*The* WOMAN *follows her* HUSBAND. *The stage darkens.*)

SECOND PICTURE

(*A Dream Picture.*)

The Interior of the Stock Exchange is indicated. At the desk the OFFICIAL RECORDER. *Round him* BANKERS *and* BROKERS. *The* RECORDER *has the face of the* HUSBAND.

THE RECORDER. I record.
FIRST BANKER. Munition factories—
350.
SECOND BANKER. Make it
400.
THIRD BANKER. I sell
At 400.

(*The* FOURTH BANKER *drags the* THIRD *forward. In the background there is a murmur of bidders and sellers.*)

FOURTH BANKER (*to* THIRD BANKER). Heard the news?
Retreat imperative.
The great offensive
Is going to fail.
THIRD BANKER. And the reserves?
FOURTH BANKER. The stuff
Is poor in quality.
THIRD BANKER. The food inadequate?
FOURTH BANKER. That also.
Although
Professor Uhde thinks
That 95 per cent of rye
Is a luxurious diet.
THIRD BANKER. And leadership?
FOURTH BANKER. Is excellent.
THIRD BANKER. Not enough alcohol?
FOURTH BANKER. The distilleries
Work at high pressure.
THIRD BANKER. Then what is lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. The General at head-quarters
Has sent for ninety-three professors,
Including the official Gluber
Who's in our pocket—
Results are rumoured.
THIRD BANKER. Which are?

FOURTH BANKER. To be kept dark
In bourgeois circles.
THIRD BANKER. Does a perverted love
Weaken the troops?
FOURTH BANKER. Strangely, no.
For man hates man.
There is a lack.
THIRD BANKER. What's lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. The mechanism of life
Has been revealed.
THIRD BANKER. What's lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. The masses
Require incentive.
THIRD BANKER. What's lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. Just love.
THIRD BANKER. That's quite enough!
And so the war
Our instrument,
Our mighty instrument,
Which pulls the strings—
That Kings and States,
Ministers, Parliaments,
The Press, the Church,
Must dance—
The round world over,
The oceans over,
Dance—
Our war is lost,
You say, is lost!
Is that the balance?
FOURTH BANKER. No, you miscalculate.
The flaw is found,
Accounts will balance?
THIRD BANKER. How so?
FOURTH BANKER. Quite internationally.
THIRD BANKER. Is that known?
FOURTH BANKER. The contrary.
We dress it up—
It's purely patriotic
And independent
Of our depreciated currency.
THIRD BANKER. Well underwritten?
FOURTH BANKER. The biggest banks
Support the enterprise.
THIRD BANKER. And profits?
Dividends?
FOURTH BANKER. Come rolling in
Most steadily.

THIRD BANKER. It sounds a good thing;
What's the product?
FOURTH BANKER. We call it
Convalescent Home
For strengthening the will to victory:
In fact it is
State-managed brothel.
THIRD BANKER. Splendid! I'll take up
One hundred thousand.
One more question:
Who organizes?
FOURTH BANKER. Experienced generals,
Connoisseurs
Of tested regulations.
THIRD BANKER. Is the system
Planned?
FOURTH BANKER. By regulation,
As I said.
Three prices
And three categories.
Brothel for officers,
Stay overnight.
Brothel for non-coms,
Stay one hour.
And the third brothel,
Men in the ranks,
Stay fifteen minutes.
THIRD BANKER. I thank you.
When does market open?
FOURTH BANKER. At any moment.

(*There is a noise in the background. The* THIRD *and* FOURTH BANKERS *retire to the background.*)

THE RECORDER. Newly admitted:
National Convalescent Home,
Limited Company.
FIRST BANKER. I have no commission to buy.
SECOND BANKER. The dividends do not tempt me.
THIRD BANKER. I will take up
One hundred thousand
At par.
THE RECORDER. I record.
FOURTH BANKER. I, the same number.
FIRST BANKER (*to* SECOND BANKER). He's a cool bidder.
What do you think?
SECOND BANKER. A telegram!
The battle

SEVEN PLAYS

By the Same Author

I WAS A GERMAN (*The Bodley Head*)
MASSES AND MAN (*The Bodley Head*)
THE BLIND GODDESS (*The Bodley Head*)
THE SWALLOW BOOK (*Oxford University Press*)
WHICH WORLD, WHICH WAY? (*Sampson, Low*)
BROKENBROW (*Nonesuch Press*)
THE MACHINE-WRECKERS (*Benn*)
HOPPLA! (*Benn*)

SEVEN PLAYS

by

ERNST TOLLER

comprising

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS
TRANSFIGURATION
MASSES AND MAN
HINKEMANN
HOPPLA! SUCH IS LIFE!
THE BLIND GODDESS
DRAW THE FIRES!

together with

MARY BAKER EDDY

by

Ernst Toller and Hermann Kesten

With

a new introduction by
the Author

REED COLLEGE

LONDON
JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE
ON THE ENGLISH EDITIONS OF THE PLAYS

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS was first published by Ernest Benn Ltd. in 1923. MASSES AND MAN was first published by the Nonesuch Press in 1923, and reprinted by them in 1924 and 1926; it was reissued by the Bodley Head in 1934. HINKEMANN was first published by the Nonesuch Press under the title of BROKENBROW. HOPPLA! was first published by Ernest Benn Ltd. in 1928. THE BLIND GODDESS was first published by the Bodley Head in 1934. TRANSFIGURATION, DRAW THE FIRES! and MARY BAKER EDDY are here published in English for the first time.

PT2642
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SEVEN PLAYS first published in 1935

Note.—All dramatic, performing and other rights in these plays are strictly reserved, and application for permission to perform any of these plays should be made to the Author.

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Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE increasing persecution of the products of the mind indicates that the dictators of this world have realized the power of the word and the moral nature of art—and are afraid.

The days when society indulgently tolerated the artist as a sort of luxury unrelated to the real business of living, as a man whose moods were not to be taken seriously and whose weapons were aimed at empty air, were good neither for art nor for the artist. He forgot that technique is not enough, that character also is necessary; he forgot that it was not his task to serve the tastes of the day but to serve the eternal powers of life—truth, justice, joy, beauty, freedom, the mind and the spirit. He degenerated into the servant of his rulers; he became one voice among many, whose sole aim was to distract the mind from present reality. He was concerned not with illuminating the all too short span of time allotted the citizens of this earth, but with killing it. For this mad question, "What can I do to kill time?" was the dominating question of the age; an age when the few who were well fed were hard put to it to find interests for their leisure, and when the many who were hungry were still more hard put to it to find a moment of leisure for themselves. (But when they stood outside the closed doors of offices and factories because the ruling system had no use for them they had more leisure than they wanted, so much leisure, in fact, that they would have chosen any death but a natural one.)

The few regarded themselves as the lessees of art; they paid for it and their spirit was reflected in the art of their time. In their theatres the terrible story of mankind was twisted into empty trifling, all that was shown of the great social and religious struggles were ephemeral episodes with swaggering adventures in fancy dress; the tremendous drama of the human passions was reduced to the vitally absorbing question of which woman had betrayed which man. Betrayed and betrayers they all were; dramatists and public, producers and actors.

The plays collected in this volume are social dramas and tragedies. They bear witness to human suffering, and to fine

yet vain struggles to vanquish this suffering. For only unnecessary suffering can be vanquished, the suffering which arises out of the unreason of humanity, out of an inadequate social system. There must always remain a residue of suffering, the lonely suffering imposed upon mankind by life and death. And only this residue is necessary and inevitable, is the tragic element of life and of life's symbolizer, art.

Four of these plays were written in prison, others were banned. And, finally, when a dictator came to power in Germany, a man who tolerated no writers unless they were prepared to become his slaves and obey him like dogs and glorify his inhuman teachings, they were one and all publicly burnt.

But even the power of dictators is limited. They can kill the mind for a time and they can kill it in any one land. But across the border they are impotent; across the border the power of the word can save itself and harbour itself; the word, which in the long run is stronger and greater than any dictator, and which will outlast them all.

Thus these plays come to be published in the land of Shakespeare and Shelley, the scene of the author's involuntary yet voluntary exile, the land which has become a second home to him.

LONDON, 17 *October* 1934.

ERNST TOLLER.

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS

A Drama of the English Luddites in a prologue and five acts

English version by ASHLEY DUKES

PERSONS OF THE PROLOGUE

Lord Chancellor of England
Lord Byron
Lord Castlereagh
Other Peers.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Jimmy Cobbett
John Wibley
Charles
Bob
William
Edward
Arthur
George
Ned Lud
(weavers)
A Pedlar
A Beggar
Two Drunkards
An Officer
Henry Cobbett (overseer)
Mrs. Cobbett (mother of Henry and Jimmy)
Old Reaper
Teddy Wibley
Mary Wibley (Old Reaper's daughter)
Ure (a manufacturer)
Ure's little Daughter
Man with a Barrow
Deaf and Dumb Man
Blind Man
Women Weavers
Children
Margaret Lud
Young Lud
A Streetwalker
Ure's Guest
An Engineer

The Scene is laid in London and Nottingham, about the years 1812–15

THE MACHINE-WRECKERS

PROLOGUE

(*The House of Lords*, 1812. *In the middle the* LORD CHANCELLOR *on the woolsack. To right and left of him seats for* LORD BYRON *and* LORD CASTLEREAGH; *in the first row of the theatre sit other peers.*)

LORD CHANCELLOR. A Government Bill to render the destruction of machinery punishable by death. The Bill was passed by a majority at the first reading. We will proceed to the second and third readings. —Lord Byron.

LORD BYRON. All of you know, my lords, why we are met.
The working weavers are confederate
Against their masters; they have used duress
And plan destruction. But whose policy
Taught them the trade of havoc, whose the hand
That undermined the welfare of the realm?
It was the policy of robber wars,
The myth of heroes from your history books,
That grew to be the curse of living men!
O, can you wonder, lords, if in these times
When fraud and shameless greed like mildew tarnish
Our highest ranks, the working folk forget
The duty that they owe the State, and add
Guilt to the burden of their penury?
Theirs is a crime, my lords, I grant, and yet
Such deeds are daily done in Parliament.
The evildoer in high places knows
How to slip through the meshes of the law:
The workman does his penance for the crime
That hunger, hunger drove him to commit.
Machinery stole ground beneath his feet,
Thrust him relentless on the road to want.
Rebellion cried within him:
Nature demands that all shall live!
Nature denies that some must feast
While others famish! Noble lords,
The labourer stood in readiness
To till the fallow fields of England;
Only the spade he held was not his own.

He was a beggar. Who rose up
And said: We help you in your need?
Blind passion was the end for all of us.
You call these men and women rabble,
Cry out upon the many-headed monster,
Demand its leaders shall be straightway hanged.
Where Mercy starves, the State must thirst for blood.
The sword, as ever, is a shift of fools
To hide their folly.
Let us consider well this rabble, lords:
It is the rabble digging in your fields,
It is the rabble serving in your halls,
It is the rabble whence your soldiers spawn,
It is the strong arm that sets you in power
To bid defiance to an enemy world,
And it will bid defiance to its masters
If it be driven madly to despair.
And one thing more I say to you, my lords,
For wars your purse was ever open wide;
A tenth part of the money that you gave
To Portugal in "service of mankind"
Would have sufficed to still the pangs at home
And give the gallows peace. I saw in Turkey
The most despotic rule the world has known,
But nowhere dearth in plenty such as here
In Christian England.
And what is now your remedy for the ill?
Hanging, the nostrum of all penny-quacks
Who burrow in the body of the State!
Is not the law bespattered to the crown?
Shall blood be shed until it steams to Heaven
In witness of your guilt? Is hanging medicine
For hunger and despair? Suppose, my lords,
Your bill made law. Regard the prisoner
Brought up for judgment, dull with misery,
Weak with starvation, weary of a life
That by your reckoning is of less account
Than one dismantled loom. Regard this man,
Torn from the family whose breadwinner
He may not be (although the will is there),
Dragged into court. Who will pronounce the verdict?
Twelve honest men and true? Never, my lords!
Command twelve butchers as your jurymen,
And make a hangman judge!

(*Ironical laughter has broken out among the peers.*)

LORD CHANCELLOR. Lord Castlereagh.

LORD CASTLEREAGH. You have heard, my lords,
The speech of this most honourable peer.
His was a poet's voice, and not a statesman's.
Poets may dream in verses and write dramas,
But statecraft is the business of hard men.
It is a poet's licence to espouse
The cause of vagabondage; statesmen stand
By principle alone. Poverty is a law
Of God and Nature, and compassionate scruples
Must have no place in legislators' minds.
The reverend Malthus showed that scores of thousands
Too many live in England, and the earth denies
Bread to the masses that encumber her.
The miseries we see are God-ordained
And we must bow in silence to His Will.
Plague, war, and famine yearly rid the world
Of needless burdens. Shall we combat Nature?
That would be criminal. We must accept
The world we know, the law we comprehend,
And aid them with the power we can dispose.
The more we help the poor, the more they breed.
They *must* not multiply on England's soil!
And every means that hinders them is just,
If only it accord with moral practice
And Divine precept.

LORD BYRON. Let the children starve!

LORD CASTLEREAGH. Your *beau geste*, my lord, we must admire,
But as a statesman I reply with coldness,
The more the infant ranks are thinned by Death
The better for our children and our land.
There are too many of us, honoured poet;
An iron fact that all our sympathy
Can never soften. I would beg my lords
Consider one thing only, that the welfare
Of England is at stake. Plots are afoot
To break the quiet of our peaceful realm.
If Justice have a temple, let me lay
This bill upon her altar, confident
That sober statecraft will outweigh the voice
Of poetry and passion.

(*Applause of the peers.*)

LORD CHANCELLOR. The debate is ended. We will proceed to a division. Those noble lords in favour of the Bill?

(*All but* LORD BYRON *rise.*)

Those against?

(LORD BYRON *rises in his place. Laughter.*)

I observe one vote. The bill is passed. The sitting is adjourned until to-morrow.

(*The stage darkens. End of the prologue.*)

ACT ONE

A street in Nottingham on a sunny day in Spring. Children with pinched and wan faces, in ragged clothes, squat dully round a wooden framework in the shape of gallows. JIMMY COBBETT, *in mechanic's clothes, comes from a side street and looks on.*

JIMMY. What, idle all? Is this a holiday?

FIRST BOY. The guys are to be hanged.

JIMMY. The guys?

FIRST GIRL. Yes, guys. They're hidden in the house of Weaver John.

SECOND BOY. I've seen them.

JIMMY. Are all of you at drudgery so young?

FIRST BOY. My brother, four years old, stands at the loom.

FIRST GIRL. Teddy can hardly walk and earns three pence a day; three real pennies.

(SECOND GIRL *begins to cry.*)

JIMMY. Why are you crying, little one? (*She does not answer.*) Tell me, for I keep secrets.

SECOND GIRL. O, sir, I can't tell . . . but the sun's so warm to-day!

JIMMY (*after a silence*). Children, do you know any games?

FIRST GIRL. We are so hungry, sir!

JIMMY. Do you love fairy tales?

SECOND BOY. "Fairy tales," what are those?

JIMMY. Strange tales of far-off lands of wonder,
Tales of bright meadows where the children play.

SECOND GIRL. Oh, play! Tell us one, sir!

JIMMY. A rich man—Golden Belly was his name—
With several castles all as big and fine
As Mr. Ure's new house up on the hill,
Lived with an only daughter he called Joy.
She wore a golden frock, and played all day
With golden playthings in a golden garden.

FIRST BOY. With golden playthings?

FIRST GIRL. Was she never at the loom?

JIMMY. Never. The man was rich, his child called Joy.
And not far from their castle lived a weaver
Who also had an only child, called Sorrow,
A meagre boy with puny chest and legs
Like sally-rods—a starveling such as thou.

And one day little Sorrow, with a load
Of linen in a basket on his arm
Came to the castle door. He saw the golden toys,
The golden garden——

(*The* THIRD BOY *has crept aside to rummage in the gutter.*)

THIRD BOY. Hurrah, I've found a crust!
FIRST GIRL. Give us a bite!
FIRST BOY. You cheat! We listen and you look for bread!
That isn't fair! Give here! We'll share it!

(*The children wrestle with the third boy.*)

THIRD BOY. I won't! I won't! I'll bite you—see!
SECOND BOY. Bite, will you! I'll teach you to bite!

(*There is a scuffle for the crust. The* THIRD BOY *runs away, and the others chase him.*)

JIMMY. Called Joy . . . called Sorrow . . .

(*From a side street comes a procession of Weavers, men and women, in ragged clothes. Some of the men wear paper caps. In front are held aloft three guys or puppets representing strike-breakers. Uproar.* JOHN WIBLEY *mounts a step at the base of the gallows.*)

JOHN WIBLEY (*to the guys*). Turncoats and traitors! Scabs of master's men!
Blacklegs and varlets! Greedy wolfish pack
That lap the hunger-sweat of poverty!
With one accord we took our stand to strike,
No hand's turn at machines! And then these toads,
These buttock-men went creeping to the mill
To beg the favour of a place! May Hell
Devour your flesh, and twist your bones with tongs,
May Nightmare grind a hoof upon your hearts,
Your gullets be enlac'd with knotted cords
Dipped in hot oil! May you be put in chains
Before a liquor-vat, and when your tongues are dry
See wrinkled hags befoul your drinking-pot!

(*The guys are hanged amid plaudits. Two weavers take place to right and left of the gallows, and sing in a monotone.*)

FIRST WEAVER. They served the master, but betrayed the man.
SECOND WEAVER. So hang them high!
FIRST WEAVER. They broke their faith and kneeled at Mammon's throne.
SECOND WEAVER. So hang them high!
FIRST WEAVER. They sold their bodies and befouled their minds.
SECOND WEAVER. So hang them high!
FIRST WEAVER. If they're in Heaven, who can be in Hell?

SECOND WEAVER. They shall not come to Heaven. Hang them high!

CHORUS (*dancing round the gallows*).

Ba, ba, black sheep!
Ba, ba, black sheep!

FIRST WEAVER. Blackleg, Blackleg, have you any wool?

SECOND WEAVER. Yes, sir, yes, sir, three bags full.
One for the master, one for the man,
And one for the trimmers who serve whom they can.

Chorus—Ba, ba, black sheep!
Ba, ba, black sheep!

FIRST WEAVER. Down, down, down and down,
Pauper and drudge and slave!
From moor and meadow, street and loom,
From sty and dunghill, hutch and tomb,
Hark to the thunder-call of doom:
Work or the grave!

SECOND WEAVER. Out, out, out and out,
With despot, tyrant, waster!
What, shall we toil for idlers' gain?
Who will not work with might and main
Is England's curse and freedom's bane;
Our right is master!

(*The Weavers pull up the beams of the gallows, and go off singing.*)

SONG.

On, on, on and on,
The coward's day is past!
The night is flown, the dawn is bright,
The measure's full, the sands are light,
The battle joined, the end in sight;
Who will stand fast?

(NED LUD *and* CHARLES *remain.*)

NED LUD. I'll wager that not ten of them have shirts to their backs.

(*A* PEDLAR *comes, crying his wares.*)

PEDLAR. Parr's Life Pills! Parr's Life Pills! No weaver need starve. Without bite or sup they make you look like England's queen. Parr's Life Pills! Parr's Life Pills!

(*An old* BEGGAR *comes, looking for crusts.*)

BEGGAR. I can see well this is no working day. The children—devil's brood—have swallowed all.

(*He comes to* JIMMY.)

Sir, give me a halfpenny.

JIMMY. I am a man as poor as you. An out-of-work, a tramp, well-nigh starving.

BEGGAR. The man for my money then. Do you think I would beg from a bladder of lard? If there were none but rich on this earth, all beggars would famish. The poor share and share alike. That's how they come to Heaven.

JIMMY. How so?

BEGGAR. Know you not the words of the Lord Jesus? It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. The rich are close and love not giving; that is why they grow pot-bellied. The gate of the Kingdom is narrow; just big enough for shrunken starvelings like our poor. And the gate is low. A tall man such as you can scarce pass through for the cap he wears. You stand in peril of damnation.

JIMMY (*giving him his cap*). Friend, you have missed your calling. You should have been a parson, or a Parliament man.

BEGGAR. 'Tis true, I am no common beggar. I am a beggar with a greed for renown. I am looking for the man who will give me land worth three hundred pounds sterling. Once, long ago, I saw Westminster Palace from the street; and the fancy takes me to see it from within. Farewell, friend. The sun loves men as young as you, and it is no more than courtesy to bare the head to a lover.

JIMMY. Your love is the bottle, it seems. And I fear my cap will go over the potman's counter.

BEGGAR. Friend, you are an Irishman. You have eaten too many potatoes. They work windily on the stomach, and the bad air is belched in moralizing. Get you a pig instead. But don't mate with him. They say the Irish love their pigs so dearly that they sleep with them. That way lies the breeding of pigheads; and we have enough of them in England already.

(*The* BEGGAR *goes off.* TWO DRUNKARDS *come in, arm in arm.*)

FIRST DRUNKARD (*sings*). Sharpen the scythe! The corn is ripe,
The children cry for bread.
The fields are watered with their tears,
Dunged by their fathers' dead!
When hands were cold and hearts were numb
The winter seed was spread.

SECOND DRUNKARD. Blessed are the poor in spirit, saith the Lord. And to whom He loveth, He giveth. What, are we poor in spirit? Gin, gin for my penny! Hast a penny, brother?

FIRST DRUNKARD. A penny! Ha, ha! Where kings line their closets with the gold of the Easterlings! I have a hundred shillings, man—in my belly! My wife drinks gin with me—and my children too. . . . They can take their bottle—ha, ha!—better than you! The youngest takes gin from the breast—gin—gin——

BOTH DRUNKARDS (*singing*). Gin—gin—gin—gin——

(*They pass on.* JIMMY *comes up to* NED LUD.)

JIMMY. You are Ned Lud?

NED LUD. So they call me. And you?

JIMMY. A workman like yourself.

NED LUD. From Nottingham?

JIMMY. Nottingham born and bred. For years a vagabond; now back again for the first time. I wandered over England and the Continent.

NED LUD. I greet you then as comrade on your home-coming.

JIMMY. Thank you, Ned Lud. . . . The weavers are on strike?

CHARLES. The steam-engine is in the town!

NED LUD. They seek to press us into fearful slavery!

JIMMY. Therefore the fight?

NED LUD. They would put us in irons, and chain us to a monster. A spindle driven by steam that clutches men and whirls them round and slings them into hell!

JIMMY. The spinning-mule is in the village.

NED LUD. Every man on God's earth has a right to live by the work of his hands. Every man is born free, and has a right to a trade. . . . A holy right! Whoever robs him of it is a thief! The masters betrayed us when they brought the steam-engine into the town! What does our handicraft count for now?

JIMMY. But you had the spinning-jenny?

CHARLES. That was the first offence against our rights.

NED LUD. One weaver worked three spindles; the jenny drives eighteen. It robs five weavers of their daily bread. A thousand spindles, so they say, are driven by the mule. Now comes the day when Ure would lead us to the knackers' yard. "Hey, slaughter all the pack! I have the steam-engine!" We must stand together. No hand's turn at machines! We would live by the work of our hands, as we have always done. We are men! Engine-wages are devil's wages. We have joined hands. John Wibley is our leader. To-night we meet in session at his house.

JIMMY. And you make war on the machines?

NED LUD. Our fists are still our own!

JIMMY. I know the steam-engine, and say that what you plan is madness!

NED LUD. Mad though it be, vain though it be, we must fight, for we are men! If we endure the yoke we are no more than brutes.

JIMMY. I know that this machine is our inevitable lot—our destiny.

NED LUD. Your words are strange to me.

JIMMY. I will open your blind eyes. I go with you to Weaver Wibley. There let me speak.

NED LUD. See, here come soldiers!

(*From a side street comes a platoon of soldiers, followed by a crowd.*)

THE OFFICER. By the King's Majesty it is proclaim'd—
Now doff your caps, you ill-condition'd pack!—
That high authority is made aware
Of leagues in secret join'd by lawless men
Against the peace and order of this realm.
Therefore *We do prohibit* all endeavour
By faction to increase the proper wage
Or lessen the appointed hours of labour.
We do prohibit every let or hindrance
To diligent subjects in their lawful trade,
Whether by threat, persuasion, or request.
We do forbid all workmen to forsake
In common cause their service or employ.
We do forbid the hoarding up of gold
For times when strikers shall abandon duty.
We do allow the honourable masters
By their own measure to decree the wage
And working hour. For those who disobey
Our mandate, *We ordain* a penalty
Up to, but not above, ten years' imprisonment.
Those faithful subjects who inform the law
Of secret leagues, and show the hiding-place
Of wrongful and forbidden funds, receive
The half of all such monies in reward.
The other half is forfeit to the Crown.
Let all men go their ways. God Save the King!

(*Flourish of trumpets. The soldiers march off.*)

NED LUD. Half for brother Judas, half for brother King. An honourable share indeed!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene I

A parlour, where Henry Cobbett *and his mother are at their midday meal.*

Henry. I hate this onion-sauce, this gutter-seasoning!

Mother (*meekly*). Your father always——

Henry. Father! Father! I know his style. The dainty dish at the wedding breakfast—roast beef with onion sauce! Then onions for Christmas, Easter, Whitsun. Father had no enemy but himself.

Mother. His wages——

Henry. Nonsense. Want of ability. He remained a stocking-weaver to the end. I was an overseer by thirty. Mark the difference! Let us drop the subject. The thought of those days turns the stomach sour.

(Jimmy *enters.*)

Jimmy. Mother!

Mother. My boy! To see you once again——

Jimmy. Good day, Henry.

Henry. So you have grown into a man—at last. To judge by your clothes you've little else to boast of.

Mother. You must be tired and hungry. Sit with us.

(Jimmy *seats himself.*)

Jimmy. You're fine and cosy here.

Henry. What is your profession?

Jimmy. A tramp, mechanic, out-of-work.

Henry. That's no profession.

Jimmy. I'm a workman. A weaver.

Henry. That's no honour.

Jimmy. The Queen has not a greater in her gift.

Henry. A strange sort of honour—to be a gutter-snipe!

Jimmy. Do you call yourself a gutter-snipe? The bird fouls its own nest.

Henry. You're making a mistake.

Mother. Henry's not a weaver now. He's worked his way right up. He's overseer for Mr. Ure.

Jimmy. If he abuses workmen, he abuses me.

Henry. It's not my fault my brother is a vagabond.

Jimmy. And why do you live at ease and eat your bellyful? Because the vagabonds give their strength, their lives.

HENRY. A law of Nature. If the strong are to live, the weak must go to the wall. Do you ask me to *sink* again? Do you ask me to let go what I have won?

MOTHER. You'll stay in Nottingham, Jimmy?

JIMMY. I came in time, it seems. The weavers are on strike.

HENRY (*sharply*). What's that?

JIMMY. They claim their rights as men.

HENRY. Words! Phrases!

JIMMY. Is misery a phrase? Starvation? Or child drudgery?

HENRY. You are a rebel.

JIMMY. If love of justice is rebellion, yes.

HENRY. You must leave Nottingham.

JIMMY. There's no call to go.

HENRY. But my position——

JIMMY. No concern of mine.

HENRY. A pretty guest we're entertaining, mother!

MOTHER. Jimmy, you're not in earnest?

JIMMY. Never more in earnest, mother.

HENRY. Look at the rabble you would make your friends. On Sunday, the Lord's Day, they roll from one pothouse to the next. The womenfolk are on the streets, girls of twelve sell themselves at every corner. The children steal. Not long ago the police dragged the Trent for a child's body and found sixty! Sixty murdered children!

JIMMY. Who were the fathers? You and your like, your gentlemen with cash to buy your fancy. Why did the mothers throw their holy babes into the river? Because not one of the fathers stood by them! Because your church makes a shame of their miracle and an infamy of their honour. Why do the men lie drunk in the inns? Because their houses are stinking hutches, fit for brutes! The workmen are better than their masters. For every child who goes hungry, for every man in rags, for every roofless, homeless vagabond, for every living soul that cries for beauty and freedom and is driven to live in squalor, you must answer at the reckoning!

HENRY. The weavers are in league against the engine. Do you justify that crime?

JIMMY. Workmen will make themselves the masters of machinery!

HENRY. Then I've said all. Go your way, I'll go mine. I shall disown you well enough. No kith nor kin of mine. No kith nor kin. Mother, now take your choice.

(HENRY *leaves the room.*)

MOTHER (*after a silence, with an effort*). No—my boy—no! To go back to the old life, the old misery—no! I can't! The hungry years, the bitter winters—no! To count the pence to buy potatoes—no! And the dirt! The rags! I'm old and ill. Don't ask me, for I can't!

JIMMY. That means you're sending me away?

MOTHER (*sobbing*). I'm over sixty. To live it all again—no, no!

(*She goes out.* JIMMY *alone, then the* BEGGAR.)

BEGGAR. Charity, kind sir!

JIMMY. The sight of you is a charity, friend, though you come out of time.

BEGGAR. No time is ever out of time, says worldly wisdom. When Time rides an Arab, he runs overtime, and when he straddles an old nag, he's killing time. But when he mounts a wench, then 'tis breeding-time. Has your sweetheart sent you packing?

JIMMY. Mother and brother sent me packing. Mother and brother.

BEGGAR. Old Age and Middle Age, friend. You might have fared worse. It was Youth who showed *me* the door. My son found no call to harbour cripples; he was for every man earning his keep. He found it was my merry sport that set him in this world; and now 'twas his turn to dance. He found me irksome. There, maybe, he was right.

JIMMY. Then you and I can shake hands.

BEGGAR. Aye, so we can. Is that your dinner on the table? I'll take it as an earnest of good-will—though you forgot your manners and didn't ask me. And what will you be—a beggar?

JIMMY. No, friend, I must work. We have a fight before us. The weavers are up and on the march.

BEGGAR. So you would lead them, would you? Then it will be my turn to be breadwinner for us both. Workmen as good Samaritans—I want no better. But workmen as masters—there you'll see miracles indeed! The mill-owners set the Spanish fly on your breast; but the weavers will set three—one on your breast, one on your hips, and one no matter where. I wish you joy of their service!

JIMMY. You're bitter.

BEGGAR. Say truthful, friend.

JIMMY. All men may not be like your son.

BEGGAR. Friend, friend of mine, have you a roof to-night?

JIMMY. No.

BEGGAR. Then let me offer you the state-room in my palace. You shall be guest of honour there. Lord Rat shall be your valet, and Lady Louse prepare your bath, and Mistress Flea-in-Waiting be your merry bed-fellow.

JIMMY. Show me your lodging. I have grave affairs to settle this evening. Then I will come to you.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

Scene II

A room in John Wibley's *cottage, furnished with a table, two broken-down chairs, and two weaving stools.* Old Reaper *at the window and* Teddy.

Old Reaper. For it is written: As I live, saith the Lord. To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that I am Lord. And here stands one whose knees are not bowed, and whose tongue does not confess Him.

Teddy. Grandpa, I am so hungry!

Old Reaper. Does He let you hunger?

Teddy. Grandpa! (*A silence.*) Grandpa, I want to be able to run like Mr. Ure's little girl. But my legs—look at them! (*A silence.*) If I had bread to eat, oh, then I'd play! (*A silence.*) Grandpa, why don't you give me bread? I'm hungry, hungry. . . .

Old Reaper. But I have none, I have none! He—up there—has it all, all! He up there! He lets the just famish and the unjust live in feasting. O Thou, Thou Murderer of children! But wait, Teddy, wait! The day of deeds will come! A fight for life and death—for life and death. Teddy, where's my gun?

Teddy. Here, Grandpa, here's the stick.

Old Reaper. That's no stick, Teddy, that's a gun. I know One who must fall. (*He takes the stick and aims upward. He makes as if to pull a trigger, and lets the stick drop. Whimpering.*) The trigger's rusted. It—won't—fire!

Teddy. Grandpa, have you seen the steam-engine? They say it has a hundred heads.

Old Reaper. Perhaps it is God. It may be God. Where—where is the engine?

Teddy. I'll take you to see it, if you like. But not a word to father. Do you promise?

Old Reaper. Take me. Take me to it. I may be on His track.

Teddy. To-morrow night—when father's fast asleep.

(*Enter* John Wibley.)

John Wibley. Mother not in yet?

Teddy. No, father.

John Wibley. The gun again, old fellow? You'll not hit the mark.

Old Reaper. The wise in their own conceit have become fools.

(John Wibley *laughs.*)

Teddy. Father, there's a molehill in the yard. Shall we catch the mole?

John Wibley. Let the creature live.

Old Reaper. There, it's in order. My gun, my precious . . .

(MARY, *a young handsome woman, comes in.*)

MARY. Evening, all.

JOHN WIBLEY. Did Cobbett pay your wages?

MARY (*throwing money on the table*). Fivepence.

JOHN WIBLEY. The cur! The cur!

MARY. Leave me the half. We've not a loaf to eat. Last week I gave you all I earned—and all I made as well.

JOHN WIBLEY. See—not a penny left.

MARY. Have you been gaming?

JOHN WIBLEY. And if I had? I would go whoring if I were a gentleman. I don't need money for myself.

MARY. The thatch is leaky. Rain drips on us in the night. Wet straw. I have no money; 'tis your weavers take it all. Not one of them comes near us but to draw his pay.

JOHN WIBLEY. Debts at the grocer's?

MARY. Five shillings. Oh, this poor man's cheat! Mixing the sugar with the grounds of rice, the flour with chalk and plaster! When Margaret's babe was sick and she bought cocoa, at a thieving price, she found red earth and mutton-fat rubbed into it!

JOHN WIBLEY. Have you got supper?

MARY. A couple of potatoes, if you want them.

JOHN WIBLEY. Later. Now, Mary, come, be sensible. Go to him, play the lover, let him kiss you. Without your help I lose my standing with the men. He gives you money. Do as he bids, and see the wages paid before you kiss. Paid in advance, remember! The comrades come to-night. You're in the way at home.

MARY. Oh God! I'll do it, yes, I'll do it. This life of ours! Come, Teddy, off to bed and sleep. When you wake up you'll find a fresh loaf on your pillow. Good night, father. Sleep well.

OLD REAPER. Bathe thy limbs in balsam, daughter. For the day draws near when thou shalt be crowned queen among daughters.

MARY. With thorns, father.

(*She goes out.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. Courage, old man, the day of deeds will come!

(*Enter* CHARLES, BOB, WILLIAM, EDWARD, ARTHUR, GEORGE, *and other workmen.*)

CHARLES. It stands in place in the great weaving-shed!

BOB. A Juggernaut. All arms and gaping jaws!

WILLIAM. A monster made to tear us limb from limb!

EDWARD. This is the devil that the masters serve!

GEORGE. With us for wages!

ALL. Aye, with us for wages!

OLD REAPER. They have forsaken the straight road and gone astray.

JOHN WIBLEY. Silence, old fool. Let us take counsel, neighbours. The masters snap their fingers at our strike.

(OLD REAPER *goes out.*)

CHARLES. In church their parsons thunder, and they set the women at our throats!

BOB. The King makes outlaws of all secret leagues.

JOHN WIBLEY. May the last King be strangled with the bowels
Of the last parson!

CHARLES. Amen to that, say I.

BOB. But what comes next?

JOHN WIBLEY. Are all our sentries posted?

CHARLES. A hundred yards around they stand and watch.

JOHN WIBLEY. Ure held us for his chattels, to be bought,
Worn threadbare, thrown away. Now the machine
Stands in our place, and mastery turns to madness.
This hellish engine-monster every day
Devours the wages of a thousand men.

CHARLES. The man who steals our work sins against Nature!

CRIES. Sins against Nature!

JOHN WIBLEY. They plan to hunt the men from every town
And chain the children to their devilments.
'Tis said this engine runs for babes of three.

ALBERT. And if they leave us at the engine, what sort of drudgery will it be? We shall tie up broken threads and tend the hungry beast like prentice farmhands!

EDWARD. No longer weavers. Men without a trade.

JOHN WIBLEY. Ure has sold you to the devil! Can you call yourselves your own?

ARTHUR. What will become of us?

ALBERT. Three days I let them chain me to the engine
In Carlton, then I fled. This devil Steam
Clutches you in a vice and tears
The heart from out the breast.
And then he saws and saws and saws
The living body into pieces.
Charles, you shall be the Foot, to tread,
To tread, to tread your life away . . .
With slacken'd arms and clouded eyes
And back bent crooked at the mill.
George, you shall be the Hand, to tie
And knot and fasten, knot and tie,
With deafen'd ears and creeping blood
And dry-rot in the brain. . . .

CHARLES. With slacken'd arms, with clouded eyes——

GEORGE. With deafen'd ears, with creeping blood——

WILLIAM. What if the engine stops, and Master Steam
Quits work? Then where are Hand and Foot and drudge?

JOHN WIBLEY. Ravens, tame ravens that the master drives
Into a winter's night, to freeze and die!
To freeze and die!
CHARLES. But we are men!
JOHN WIBLEY. We were, once on a time.
CHARLES. It must not be! Why, 'tis a mortal sin!
GEORGE. A curse on Steam!
EDWARD. Ten plagues!
WILLIAM. Bound hand and foot!
OTHERS (*dully*). Bound hand and foot!
JOHN WIBLEY. One way is left. We must defy the engine.
A Moloch stands in Nottingham. Strike him down!
A monster that will breed his hateful kind
In thousands! Swear defiance here and now!
WEAVERS. We swear it!
JOHN WIBLEY. Let Moloch welter once in his black blood,
And Ure will never dare to make us fast
To such another Hell-spawn!
Death to the engine, comrades!
War on the tyrant Steam!
Death to the engine!
War on the tyrant Steam!
WEAVERS. Death to the engine!
War on the tyrant Steam!

(JIMMY *and* NED LUD *enter. The Weavers turn to* JIMMY *in alarm.*)

NED LUD. A comrade born in Nottingham. For years a traveller, now returned.

(JIMMY *greets the Weavers.*)

NED LUD (*to* WIBLEY). Agreed?
WIBLEY. Agreed.

(JIMMY *comes forward.*)

JIMMY. On what?
JOHN WIBLEY. This very night we shall destroy the engine.
JIMMY. Madmen that you are!
JOHN WIBLEY. Are you another in the engine's pay?
JIMMY. Give me an hour to speak.
JOHN WIBLEY. Not half an hour remains.
NED LUD. Let him be heard.
JIMMY. Friends, you ran headlong when the spectre of this engine raised his cruel head. Despair unmanned you. It seemed a vampire stretching out its bloody claws to clutch your souls. A god, a devil chaining you to drudgery. A monster made to lame your bodies, blunt your minds, and foul your honourable trade.
ALBERT. And so it is!

JIMMY. There are other enemies, stronger than this frame of iron and wood they call an engine.

JOHN WIBLEY. He's making game of us!

CHARLES. Let him hold his tongue!

NED LUD. We gave him leave to speak.

JIMMY. An enemy lives in yourselves! He grips your minds. He swims in your life-blood. He has dulled and deadened the spirit in you.

JOHN WIBLEY. Oho, a parson!

CHARLES. See here, this is no church!

ALBERT. We are men, not women!

NED LUD. We must hear him out.

JIMMY. Brothers, look into yourselves! How joyless, how uneasy are your lives! Do you still know that there are forests? Dark, secret forests that awaken buried springs in men? Forests that quiver with stillness? Forests where men pray? Forests where men dance?

What is your trade to you? Are you weavers of your own free choice? Did you give yourselves to the task humbly and joyfully, like men who create? No! Your work was drudgery, wage-service, necessity.

Look into your children's faces! They are chalky, sickly. Boys of ten stumble like greybeards.

JOHN WIBLEY. Is poverty our fault?

JIMMY (*vehemently*). Your fault is that you gave in without a struggle, instead of standing shoulder to shoulder like a band of working brothers—instead of *living* for comradeship and bringing your stone, each of you, to build the house of justice!

Death is here among you! He crouches in your weary eyes. He burdens your heavy steps. He has killed your joy and laughter.

And yet dreams are in you! Dreams of wonderlands. Dreams of the world of justice, dreams of towns and countries and continents linked in common labour, each for all and all for each!

Brothers, join hands! Begin! Begin! Not I and I and I! No! World and we and thou and I! If you *will* the comradeship of workers, it is yours!

O, this winnowing will shake the chaff from your souls! The earth will sprout again! And the tyrant of machinery, conquered by your own creative spirit, will be your tool and your servant!

NED LUD. Our Tool . . .

JIMMY. What if you laboured to produce for all and not for Mammon—for service, not for gain? What if instead of sixteen hours you worked but eight? With the machine no more your enemy, but your helper! What if your children, freed from drudgery, grew up in sunny schoolrooms, gardens, playing fields?

Your misery holds you by the throat! Already you are well-nigh strangled. Be men and fight! Rouse yourselves! When leaves are rotten, let them dry, not moulder! Begin, brothers! Unite! Stand together and stand fast!

(*Silence.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. I hear words, words, words! Workmen unite—ha! We are outlaws: they slammed the doors of Parliament in our faces. Votes are not for us. Votes are for the money-bags!

JIMMY. We are for more than votes. Our land for our workers! England is ruled by her great lords; no room for rabble in their house. They make robber wars and call them wars for King and country. But who bleeds for their country? Is it Mammon?

WEAVERS. No, ourselves, ourselves!

JIMMY. We are preparing for the fight. In London we have founded a League that shall embrace every workman in the kingdom. In many towns already the beacon fire of resolution burns. The commonwealth shall be our master, not Mammon! Men shall rule, not machinery!

ARTHUR. Men—men—shall rule—not—not—machinery!

JIMMY. Are you ready to lend your brothers your right arm?

WEAVERS. We are! We are!

JIMMY. The fight is hard and calls for patience, brothers. It will be harder than you guess. You must take service at the engine. You must bear the old load for many a day—you must see your wives and children hunger, and hear yourselves reproached and cursed!

WEAVERS. We are ready!

NED LUD. We choose you for our leader!

JIMMY. Each of you serves the people, each serves the cause. Each of you our leader!

WEAVERS. Each serves the people, each serves the cause!

(*They lift* JIMMY *on their shoulders and carry him out.* JOHN WIBLEY *remains alone.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. This vagabond Irishman carried shoulder high! In scarce an hour he robs me of the leadership. And these boobies would rule the earth and make it Paradise! They may believe in it. Not I!

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE I

A room in URE'S *house.* HENRY COBBETT *alone, then* JOHN WIBLEY.

HENRY. I sent for you. We'll make no mysteries with each other. You know the new agitator?

JOHN WIBLEY. Yes, Mr. Cobbett.

HENRY. You know his name?

JOHN WIBLEY. Jimmy Cobb——

HENRY. Well and good. They tell me you had words with him. A difference of opinion, eh?

JOHN WIBLEY. Not that I know of——

HENRY. None of your acting here! I know the part you play. Do you hear me? *I know the part you play*—every line of it. There was no need to send for you, Wibley. It would have been easier to have you fetched—in irons!

JOHN WIBLEY. You've got no proof——

HENRY. Come, we can save our breath in denials, both of us! We have too much to lose. Cards on the table, Wibley! My brother must leave Nottingham. Ure must not learn who the agitator is. I give you twenty-four hours to get rid of him. The time is short; the matter presses. You will be satisfied with your pay.

JOHN WIBLEY. Cards on the table. Then I—I agree.

HENRY. Arrange it as you please; that's your affair.

JOHN WIBLEY. The game would be bold——

HENRY. Have you a plan?

JOHN WIBLEY. To wreck the engine after all—quietly to let him know our plan—and then—then he would have to leave the town——

HENRY. Your own affair. I play no part in it—you understand?

JOHN WIBLEY. Can I speak to Mr. Ure?

HENRY. Is that necessary?

JOHN WIBLEY. Yes.

HENRY. Wait here.

(*He leaves the room.*)

JOHN WIBLEY (*alone*). Scum! Jack-in-office! Taskmaster, overseer, driver maybe, but not the leader of a herd of bellowing fools! This is an evening in a thousand. The door is opened.—Pray step in, Mr. Wibley.—Am I not cleverer than that toady Cobbett? Nature has given me the fawning hump.—Your most obedient servant, Mr. Ure. Just as you think fit, Mr. Ure.—I throw myself at your feet, good Mr.

Ure. We need lower wages, longer working hours? I'm entirely of your opinion, Mr. Ure.—But I'll make the cursed pack laugh the wrong side of their mouths, trust me for that! One milestone passed, but there are more to come.—Let me but put a cushion to my back, for it stands in need of fattening.

(URE *enters.*)

URE. John Wibley, weaver?

JOHN WIBLEY. Your servant, Mr. Ure.

URE. Out of work?

JOHN WIBLEY. I was twelve years a weaver in your factory, sir——

URE. I can take no account of individual claims. Industry is a national interest. We must all bow to its requirements, I as well as you.

JOHN WIBLEY. It's not work I'm after, Mr. Ure.

URE. What then?

JOHN WIBLEY. I came because—because it goes against the grain to see trouble made among the hands—because I have eaten my bread at your table these twelve years, Mr. Ure.

URE. Come to the point. What is happening?

JOHN WIBLEY. There's a plot, Mr. Ure,—a plot to destroy the engine.

URE. Take a seat, if you please. A cigar? Be good enough to give me all the details.

JOHN WIBLEY. An agitator from London has come to Nottingham. No one knows his name. A Communist. A member of the secret workers' league, and in the pay of France. He has been stirring up the weavers to destroy machinery. He promised them arms; said blood must flow.

URE. So there's a limit even you refuse to overstep. I'm glad of that, Wibley. The living blood of comradeship between master and man is no legend. I knew it. Labour makes us one.

JOHN WIBLEY. I will carry out your orders, Mr. Ure.

URE (*slowly*). H'm. There is little to say at the moment. An attack on the engine will not alarm me. Rather the contrary. At a time like the present the actual occurrence of such a crime might well strengthen our position. It would open the eyes of our go-as-you-please Government. The material loss would be made good by the prospect of an orderly and well-regulated future. H'm. You understand me? I wish to be informed of every development that takes place.

JOHN WIBLEY. Very good, Mr. Ure.

URE (*takes a sheet of paper and writes*). Give that to the cashier.

JOHN WIBLEY. Very good, Mr. Ure.

(URE'S *little daughter runs into the room, and clings to her father's knees.*)

URE. Yes, Wibley, they talk of a gulf between master and man. Fiddlesticks! Take a father's love, for instance. What difference is

there? When our children are sick we feel their pain as if it were our own. You as well as I. Good day to you, Wibley.

(URE *and the little girl go out.*)

JOHN WIBLEY (*alone*). Bloodsucker! The one famishes, the other starves him. Is that a difference? One child vomits in the lap of plenty, the other never sees white bread. Is that a difference? Scum, all of you, scum! And if you think, Master Ure, that I came creeping to your money-bags like a louse to your belly—bah! Call me a traitor! Fiddle-faddle! The ferret drives the polecat from the pigeon-loft. A change of tenants, nothing more. A traitor—ha! The word's a bogy fit to frighten children! A traitor? That depends on the result.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE II

A dirty street in front of JOHN WIBLEY'S *cottage. The houses are mostly one-storied.* JIMMY COBBETT *and* JOHN WIBLEY *meet.*)

JIMMY. Blacklegs are working in the factory.

JOHN WIBLEY. I know.

JIMMY. But that must stop.

JOHN WIBLEY. 'Twas you preached patience to the men. You counselled work at the machines. You are to treat with Ure to-day. Ask him to send his interlopers home!

JIMMY. You wonder why I am resolved to treat with Ure? I'll tell you. This is not the hour for the decisive fight. We must avoid it. If we are driven to fight to-day, defeat is certain, and our strength will be exhausted. The hour will come when England will be ready. Then, comrade, there will be an end of bargaining! But now, *because* we treat with Ure, no other men must work. We must place pickets at the factory gates.

JOHN WIBLEY. Better to set upon the blacklegs in the shed, and hunt them home like rats—those that are fit to run!

JIMMY. Why set upon them, when persuasion serves our end? They are workmen like ourselves. Blind and misled, but workmen.

JOHN WIBLEY. We must have deeds, not words!

JIMMY. Is every deed an altar where men's knees must bow? A senseless deed makes fools drunk and cowards brazen.

JOHN WIBLEY. We need defeat. Rebels are bred in misery. Give them their bellyful and they spit on your counsel and turn to wallow in the trough like full-fed sows.

JIMMY. Rebels are bred in misery. But let the misery grow until it clutches every throat—till all are roofless, homeless, famishing. Are they good rebels then? Ask them for comradeship and they will

scoff at you. Ask them to keep faith, and they will run to every trickster who lends the magic of words to their desires. Ask them for sacrifice, and they will be the hirelings and the prey of every leader who dangles the hope of booty before their greedy eyes.

JOHN WIBLEY. Hunt them from their lairs like wild beasts! Blood is the lash to whip them out of sloth!

JIMMY. With what contempt you speak of these workmen you would lead to freedom! What smouldering malice in your eyes! One would think you had no wish to free them, but only to revenge yourself! The man who arouses the baser instincts of the masses is overwhelmed by their fury. To-day he lets loose the storm, to-day he is a leader, to-morrow he is crushed by an avalanche of blind, mad passions, to-morrow he is a traitor spat upon by thousands!

JOHN WIBLEY. I've no book-learning, but we shall see who knows the workmen best. The working folk feel otherwise, think otherwise than you. . . . So we are to assemble at the factory-gate before the midday shift?

JIMMY. That would be best.

JOHN WIBLEY. There is no time to summon all the comrades for to-day.

JIMMY. It seems to me——

JOHN WIBLEY. Impossible. We must have time. I will summon all our friends to meet before the gate to-morrow night. Then we shall see how long the working folk will march with you.

(JOHN WIBLEY *goes.* OLD REAPER *comes out of the house.*)

OLD REAPER. Have you a minute to spare for me, Jimmy? These eighty years my life has lasted now—and it was none of the best, for all the toil and trouble. Old Reaper has no wish to rise again when he is buried. He would grow into the earth—English meadow earth—so that flowers take root in his lap, and sheep nibble at his grass, beside a spring that dances merrily as a young he-goat. But before they lay Old Reaper in the grave, let him ask you one thing: why this life, Jimmy? Where is the sense and purpose of it all?

JIMMY. Do you know why the tree grows, and puts out leaves that wither in the autumn? You ask for sense and purpose? I am, thou art, we are. That is the end of wisdom. Sense is given to life by men.

OLD REAPER. Do you believe in the kingdom of God? The Kingdom of Peace?

JIMMY. I fight as though I did.

OLD REAPER. Then tell me, where shall I find God?

JIMMY. I've never fallen in with Him. Maybe you'll find Him in yourself.

OLD REAPER. But aren't you fighting against God?

JIMMY. I fight as though I believed in Him.

OLD REAPER. He, he, he! The man's cracked! He fights against the engine, and doesn't know where God is! Your wits have gone a wool-gathering, Jim. You'll come to no good end.

(JIMMY *smiles and goes away.* *A* MAN *with a four-wheeled barrow comes along the street.*)

OLD REAPER. Hey! Man with the barrow, tell me, where shall I find God? I'll give you a hand with your barrow.

MAN WITH THE BARROW (*wrathfully*). I'm no man! I'm an official, I would have you know, and scavenger to the town of Nottingham. This is no barrow. A barrow has only two wheels. This is a four-wheeled cart. All my life I pushed a barrow. At last they've given me a cart. And now you call my cart a barrow!

OLD REAPER. It's not your barrow that we speak of, friend, but God.

MAN WITH THE BARROW. God doesn't bother me. Seek and you will find Him. We're talking of my cart you call a barrow. A barrow! A barrow, a barrow, he calls my four-wheeled cart.

OLD REAPER. I wanted to give you a hand with it.

MAN WITH THE BARROW. A fine helper indeed! A man who grudges another his advancement! Barrow, barrow, barrow! You'll call my cart an engine next!

OLD REAPER. The engine! But that's what I'm looking for! That's what I'm looking for!

(*The* MAN WITH THE BARROW *goes away.* *A* BLIND MAN, *led by a* DEAF AND DUMB MAN, *comes along the street.*)

Hey, brother blind man, where shall I find God?

BLIND MAN. I don't hear Him. Ask the man who leads me.

OLD REAPER. Hey, brother, tell me where shall I find God?

(*The* DEAF AND DUMB MAN *makes signs that he does not understand.* *The* BLIND MAN *laughs.*)

What are you cackling at?

BLIND MAN. He, ha! He's deaf and dumb and doesn't see Him!

OLD REAPER. The blind man can't hear Him, the deaf and dumb man can't see Him. I have two good eyes and ears, but can't find Him.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE III

A square in front of URE'S *house.* *A high wall encloses the garden.* *The main gate is in the middle and a little wicket at the side.* *Children pass.*

FIRST BOY. I've seen the engine!

FIRST GIRL. So have I!

SECOND BOY. And I!

FIRST BOY. All shining, just like gold!

SECOND GIRL. Perhaps 'twas God that sent it.

First Boy. Stupid!

Second Girl. But parson says the angels brought it down.

First Boy. When you have played the blackleg for a day and night, then you may say "Thank you, kind God!"

Second Boy. The old loom is a miserable thing.

Second Girl. I like the engine best.

Third Boy. Let's hide. If father sees me, I am for the loom.

First Boy. We're out on strike. You needn't weave to-day.

Third Boy. Shall I tell you a secret? My father's working.

First Girl. And mine!

First Boy. These men don't hold together—shame on them!

(*The children run off. A procession of ragged women comes along.*)

Women. We want no engine! We want no engine!

(*Silence.*)

First Woman. Silent as blocks of wood they sit. Their door would open sooner to a yelping cur. I had to sell my last stick from the house. A bed, to pay the grocer. In that bed slept son and prentice, grandad, husband and myself. Many's the night I haven't known which took me in his arms. Now that last stick is gone.

Second Woman. Hey, masters, hey! Give us an answer! We are no robbers come to steal your goods by night. We are beggars—only beggars!

(*Silence.* Henry Cobbett *comes out of the house.*)

Women. We want no engine! We want no engine!

Henry. The engine stands and waits for you. Give up your senseless strike and you have bread to-morrow. I have cheap hands enough—and none of them are shirkers.

Women. Will all of us be taken on again?

Henry. I grieve to say most of the men must be paid off. But all your children will be taken on. Children of three and four years old as well. And nimble girls. Be sensible, you women! The work demands deft fingers and a delicate touch.

First Woman. Sir, good sir, send the engine from the town. Your doves have grain, no roebuck starves. You feed the sparrows in the winter time, you build the sheep a fold. We are but men and women, sir, but have compassion, for Christ's sake. We cannot live if none but girls and women work. The devil tempted you, and sent you the machine. Sir, good sir, send the engine from the town!

Women. Sir, good sir, send the engine from the town!

Henry. We do our duty to our country. 'Tis true machinery displaces men, but only for a time. Why? I will tell you. We shall produce more goods in larger factories, at half the price. At half the price! Mark that, and listen. I will tell you what it means. To-day, for instance, you must pay four shillings to the parson for a burial. Six shillings more for a good plot of earth, say two yards long by one

yard wide. Now suppose there came a joyful day when parson asked two shillings only, and the plot of earth were sold for three! Would you not die the easier for the thought of three days' wages saved to those you left behind? Half a week's wages! As eagerly as you would jump into the cheaper grave, the buyers run to purchase cheaper goods. Next comes a broadening of business and increase of demand. Give us goods! shout our customers. Goods! whistle the sirens of the ships. Goods! rattle the waggons. Goods! Goods! Goods! The end is that the factories grow out-of-date. New factories, powerful factories, giant factories, spring up; their doors are opened to the hungry workers. There are not hungry men enough in England to feed those great factories—to cram their gaping jaws, to fill their eager throats. Be patient, women. Wait awhile! I would advise those men who find no work to-day to go back to the land. If we could change the world, good women, we would do it. But there are no markets for the moment. Since the Great War, all Europe has been crippled by a load of debt. You are Englishwomen, you are patriots, you must know we cannot lend to bankrupt debtors. Our credit is our life. Our country first!

(HENRY *goes back into the house. A silence of consternation.*)

LONG-DRAWN CRY OF THE WOMEN. Down with the machines! (*A silence.*) Down with the machines!

(MARY *comes stealthily out of the garden door. She pauses, startled, then makes as if to run away. Several women run to her and drag her forward. They speak in rapid succession.*)

MARGARET. Where have you been?

SECOND WOMAN. Playing our husbands false in Cobbett's bed.

THIRD WOMAN. Her nest's well feathered!

FOURTH WOMAN. So you would play the whore in masters' beds, while we stand here and beg—beg for a mouthful!

(SECOND WOMAN *rushes at* MARY.)

SECOND WOMAN. We'll tear out the pretty toy! We'll spoil her beauty for her!

FOURTH WOMAN. The whip! the whip for hussies!

FIFTH WOMAN. Tie her naked to a ladder! Let the children spit upon her face!

SECOND WOMAN (*with a laugh*). She likes it warm!

MARGARET. A workman was too rough, too common for her!

WOMEN (*beating* MARY). You strumpet! Brazen slut! You mattress-mopsy!

(NED LUD *comes.*)

NED LUD. John Wibley's wife? Are you wild beasts? Stand back! Why are you beating her?

FIRST WOMAN. You're welcome, Lud. The woman's rotten bad,
Worse than the creatures in the public stews.
We women starve. These seven weeks and more
Not one warm sup between us. We assemble,
We drag our swooning limbs to Cobbett's gate
And cry for riddance from machinery.
FOURTH WOMAN. Were you a woman, Ned Lud, you would know
How hard it goes to bear a child, and then
With folded arms to see it starve and die!
A mother's agony!
MARGARET. What man knows that!
FIRST WOMAN. Our misery, our pain, our aching care!
THIRD WOMAN. It seems to me Ure's wife should feel for us.
SECOND WOMAN. Ure's wife, ha, ha! When she's in need of help
They call the midwife. For a pound or so
The bubble's pricked.
MARGARET. This hireling Cobbett told us to our face
The engine stays in Nottingham. The men
And older women, most of them, must go.
He drove us from the door like outworn dogs
And lay with her, a workman's wife, whose man
He throws into the gutter!

(*The women crowd in on* MARY.)

WOMEN. Beat the whore!
NED LUD (*pushing them back*). What, beat a child for pouncing on a crust?
We are all famished. Mary, why were you there?
MARY (*in a low voice*). I am—so poor—I am like all the rest.
'Tis true I did it—but not for myself.
NED LUD. You fell upon this woman like wild cats.
Think with your heads for once, not with your bowels!
Had you her looks, you all would do as much.
You all have done it, too, when you were young.
Come, Mary, they'll not harm you. This way home.
(*To the* FIRST WOMAN.) Come to me when your senses have return'd.

(NED LUD *and* MARY *go off.*)

SECOND WOMAN. The devil take her!
CRIES. Death to the engine! Down with the thieving shopkeepers! Blood or bread! Death to the engine!

(*The women form a procession and go off singing.*)

SONG

Down, down, down and down,
Pauper and drudge and slave!
From moor and meadow, street and loom,
From sty and dunghill, hutch and tomb,
Hark to the thunder call of doom,
Work or the grave!

(*During the scene* OLD REAPER *has come.*)

OLD REAPER. They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels; because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity. If I were He, I would let manna fall from heaven. But He makes no sign. When will He stir? When trumpets blow and golden harps greet kings and conquerors? The poor have no such music. Their moan is softer than the heart-beat of a child. You must have good ears to hear it. You must listen close to unwashed bosoms, stinking bosoms to hear it. I will cheer the womenfolk a little.

(OLD REAPER *takes a stick, and makes as if to play a violin. Two women pass.*)

FIRST WOMAN. Look at the cracked old man!

OLD REAPER (*as if speaking to many dancing women*). What, are you blown already? I've played three steps, no more. What do you say? You have no legs for dancing? You can scarcely stand? You are to dance and you can—scarcely—stand? Aye, aye, to be sure. Aye, aye, to be sure.

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

Scene I

A room in Ure's *house.* Henry Cobbett *is writing at a high desk. Muffled sounds are heard from the Factory, and sirens whistle. Enter* Jimmy Cobbett.

Henry. You here? What do you want? Out of here this minute! Our porters carry dog-whips. The police know how to deal with ragged tramps. And the King's soldiers have a bullet in their pouch or a halter in their knapsack for the rebel!

Jimmy. Tell Mr. Ure I want to see him, brother.

Henry. Brother? I know of no brother.

Jimmy. Then tell him that a stranger waits.

Henry. No!

Jimmy. Mr. Ure's door is never closed to callers on important business. Am I to ask the servants to announce me?

Henry. If you possess a spark of brotherly feeling, go! Leave Nottingham. England is wide. You will find dupes enough. Why must you be revenged on me? I used to beat you long ago when we were boys. Well—I was wrong.

Jimmy. So conscience stirs when your position is in danger?

Henry. Oh, this is infamous! You have come back to wreak your spite on me!

Jimmy. One bosom gave us life. My word upon it, Henry, Ure will never hear my name or know whose brother speaks to him. And that you may sleep in peace o' nights, I promise you this as well. One week more, or two at most, I stay in Nottingham. Farewell, brother. Greet the old woman from me—say I know how hard it was for her——

Henry. Here, take money. My month's salary. Go to-day—go now—this hour!

Jimmy. An English mother bore me. She taught me English speech. The horn-book where you learned the A B C of men is strange to me. Show me in, Henry. (*The other hesitates.*) Or must I knock?

Henry. Good God, I'm ruined! If I lose my place, and mother starves, the curses of her dying hour be on your head!

(*He goes.*)

Jimmy (*alone*). And are *one* blood!

(Ure *enters.*)

URE. Your name?

JIMMY. Call me Nameless. Or call me, if you will, the Full-timer, as you call your workmen full-timers or half-timers, when they man the looms as your submissive stock-in-trade.

URE. Your tone is impudent. I have no time for trifling. What do you want with me? On principle I never give to beggars. Try the vicar, my good man.

JIMMY. I may not be unknown to you. They call me the outlandish rebel who has taught the folk of Nottingham that workmen can be men.

URE. You dare?

JIMMY. I dare. The spirit owns no slavery,
No bondage to the masters of this earth.
The mind's eternal law, in adamant
Chisell'd upon the welkin of mankind,
Commands that men keep faith with what they know.
The coward who quits his Thought betrays himself.
I speak for thousands deaden'd by a yoke
Of dull oppression—seeking for the word
That shall translate the heart-beat of their soul.
I say to you that no man has the right
To rob another of that scanty bread
Without which he must wither like mown grass.
You cry aloud that work alone can save us,
And turn your practis'd craftsmen out of doors!
While countless women lack a cotton shift
To cover them, you leave the bales to rot,
Dismiss your weavers, and abuse your power
To grind a niggard wage to nothingness.
Out of the cruel fountain-head of war
Still runs the heart-blood of a continent.
Want cries aloud in prisons of despair.
Here men go hungry, there the granaries
Are choked with mildew'd corn. Here is no coal,
The people freeze, and there, above the pits,
The coal stands mountain-high. If the demand
Is lacking, ask yourselves the reason why;
Yours is the system that will have it so.
The market's at a standstill? Trade is bad?
You leave the masses scarce a pauper's dole
And whimper "Trade is bad."
O, you are blind, and for your blindness' sake
It is our task to see this world aright.
Give work to workers! Thousands will have bread
If you but shorten hours. Consider well
Before you crush with wanton heel the lives
That, like your own, were pressed into this world
To march along the road of nameless fate

And meet their doom. 'Tis God who perishes
When you destroy a brother's livelihood.

URE. Who are you, sir?
Your dress bespeaks no quality of mind.
God and our business have no truck together.
God is the shield of lonely, silent men,
To Whom they look for succour in distress.
God is too good for daily bargainings
And earthly cares. God is the Lamp of truth,
The Light of mercy shining far above
All human need. We should profane His goodness
Were we to banish Him to household tasks.
What would you have? Our town was peaceable
Until you came. You threw the torch of anger
Into a witless flock of brutish men
Whom the State shepherds into quietude
With patient toil. What is your purpose, Sir?
Ruin? Are you an enemy of peace
Who never rests until revolt and bloodshed
Like a volcano pour their lava streams
On towns and villages, to set ablaze
The scaffolding of diligent endeavour?

JIMMY. Your hands they were that threw the torch of war
Into our marching ranks. 'Tis you who tear
The stragglers from the body of mankind,
So that they stand forlorn and may not look
Their brothers in the face, unless in hatred.
You make our earth an endless battlefield
Where strong men crush the weak, and artful men
Outwit the simple—where the dastard hires
A cut-throat for his bidding, where the dupes
Lie buried and the bloodstain'd conquerors
Are counted heroes.

URE. Young man, the dreams you dream are dangerous.
You walk this earth as blind men walk. Life grows
To manhood in the universal fray.
The stag supplants the rival at his hip
And sires a lusty race of antler'd kings.
The conqueror breeds his kind, and not the weakling!
The harmony of freedom takes its root
On the grim battlefield of interest.
He who survives, survives by Nature's law
Which must remain unfathom'd by our minds.
'Tis thus we ripen, thus we civilize.

JIMMY. Oh, let a foe molest the weaker stag
And you will see the stronger take his stand
Beside his brother, lending him his power!
You speak of freedom and of interest,

Of battles fought and won, of master-men
Who live as conquerors by Nature's law.
Freedom for all! you cry. What freedom has
The weaver in your service? He is free
To die, maybe, but not to live and labour.
How prosperous was once the lot of slaves!
Their lord was their protector, foster-father,
They were not left to freeze in pitiless streets!
How enviable was the lot of guildsmen
Who fashioned tower on tower by noble toil
In unison with their masters! And to-day?
Free men, we drag in chains a load of want
That throttles every vein of manly blood.
What are we? Wares! A Thing! A hated, hateful
Thing! From the wells of life as far removed
As that old loom from your great engine-shed!
Aye, look to Nature's law. Where lives the brute
That lives alone? The eagle soaring calmly
Espies his head of game. He gives a cry
To warn his neighbour eagles, and together
They swoop upon the field to share the prize.
The full-fed ant will vomit up his meal
To feed the hungry of the common clan.
The sexton-beetle calls the neighbours in
To burrow him a house for his unborn.
The negroes live in cheerful comradeship
With fellows of their tribe; where all are one
In blood, there all are bound in brotherhood.
None but free men of cultur'd lands are deaf
When THOU, and WE, and ONE ANOTHER call.

URE. 'Tis plain your words are felt. And you and I
Stand on that field where strong men's pride compels
The battle. There's the law we speak of.

JIMMY. Let me but name that natural law again.
Your law of Nature is the law of money!
Money lends mastery to the man who gives
Another work. Not mind, not rank, but money!
Your conquerors are not chosen, but impress'd,
Not garlanded, but coin'd! And you, the lords
Of money, sink to be its patient drudge!
Money is master! Money bids you crush
The Indian peoples, children of the Spring.
And money bids you spread destruction wide
Through Eastern wonderlands, with devil's brews
Of opium and brandy. Money bids you burn
The garner'd store of riper lands for gain.
O, what you name a virtue, Nature's law,
The strong man's birthright, is your deepest shame,

The bond of self-made slavery, the badge
Of an insatiate demon, urging you
From war to war!
To wars against your brothers of one blood,
To wars of nations, races, continents.
The universal fray indeed, a war
Against YOURSELVES!

URE. And you?

JIMMY. Within our breast there is a bud
That longs to be unfolded, hiding wonder
On wonder in its petals. It is THOU!
That THOU can lift the Scriptural curse of toil,
And what is now our scourge, our brand of bondage
Shall be again our holy, happy task!

(*A silence.*)

URE. You dream. Yet I would have you dream beside me.
Henceforward you are welcome to my house.

JIMMY. Not so. Will you give work to workers, Sir?

URE (*resuming the official tone*). We must return to business, since you wish it. The terms of work are known; I have no more to add to them. They have been well considered. Expediency, not sympathy, must be our guide in these affairs.

JIMMY. We fight against you, and yet on your side.
For you, your child, and all your children's children,
The light of justice flames upon our banner!

(JIMMY *goes.*)

URE (*alone*). A fool. A strange fool. A sanguine fool. A dangerous fool. A man!

(HENRY *enters.*)

HENRY. Sir?

URE. A man was here! (*Recollecting himself.*) He must be watched, and sharply! Tell the police to keep an eye upon him. Have you made all arrangements for the manning of the engine?

HENRY. The last batch of hands has just arrived from Carlton.

URE. You may go.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE II

NED LUD'S *cellar, furnished with a table and stools. In the background is a heap of straw on which children lie.* MARGARET *and* NED LUD *sit at the table.* MARGARET *holds the youngest child in her arms, and sings a lullaby.*

MARGARET. Hey, poppy, hey, poppy, moon, mine,
Our good Lord will be here for you soon, mine,
Pack you in a golden chest, O,
Lay you in the grave to rest, O,
Earth on you,
Earth on me,
Hand in hand we knock at Heaven's gate,
Hand in hand we knock at Heaven's gate.

(*She lays the child in the straw, and returns to the table.*)

What, the cash-box here? The hidden money? Not in my house, if you please!

NED LUD. My wife a swab! Leave me some comfort, Mag.

MARGARET. You are the same old fool as ever. Let John Wibley keep the money.

NED LUD. Are you afraid they'll rummage in our cellar?

MARGARET. I have nine children.

NED LUD. So have I, Mag. So have I.

MARGARET. Look at them. See the youngest boy. When I have bedded him in lousy straw, then—God forgive me—I could wish I'd laid him in the grave.

NED LUD. He was born ailing.

MARGARET. Is that my fault? Till the last hour of labour I was standing at the loom. And then—what then? After three days the foreman sent to ask if I should be at work next morning. What could I do? At half-past four next morning I was in the stifling mill. Wet weaving—linen-yarn it was. All day the milk was running from my breasts. And how they smarted! When I left the factory that night at nine, my clothes were clinging to me from the milk. I was too tired to eat a crust. 'Twas three o'clock before I came to bed.

NED LUD. Now, Mag, who's blaming you?

MARGARET. The blame . . . the blame . . . I think they crucify Christ every day. God asks the murderers before His throne: Where is thy brother Abel? When will He ask our masters for a reckoning of men they starved, women and little ones they left to die? God-fearing gentry that they call themselves—they eat and drink, go whoring, eat and drink again. Their bellies are our burden—pah!

NED LUD. An end will come of it, I say.

MARGARET. All brag!

NED LUD. I am an English workman, and don't lie.

MARGARET. Workmen are soldiers, gaolers, hangmen—workmen all! 'Tis workmen build their gallows for them. Pah! Your eyes are guns. Well, fire away! I'm not afraid. This cash-box. Is it the money of the secret league?

NED LUD. So you would have me blab?

MARGARET. You tell me not a word, although I am your wife. I'm good for bed, maybe. Or good to mind the brats.

NED LUD (*embracing her*). Well, there's a shrew! A workman's wife, and wants her man to let his tongue run loose.

MARGARET (*going*). Nine children are enough. Mark that!

(NED LUD *alone. Then* YOUNG LUD *enters, drunk, and arm-in-arm with a* STREET-WALKER.)

YOUNG LUD (*singing*). A bed of moss, a bed of straw,
A bed for kings, a bed——

NED LUD. What's that?

YOUNG LUD. 'Evening to you, dad. My bride is brought to bed—ha, ha—I've brought my bride to——

NED LUD. Pack up!

YOUNG LUD. We will—into the straw. And close, I promise you.

NED LUD. Take that baggage out of here, I say!

YOUNG LUD. Would you insult my bride?

NED LUD. Be off, I say, or I'll lay hands on you!

YOUNG LUD. Oho, dad, that's your tune? And who's the bread-winner? Tell me that! How long have I been working for you at the mill? Since four years old! And who cared what became of me? Did you? Or mother? Who kept you from the streets, these many months? I did. And now you want to spoil an evening's sport.

NED LUD. Out, I say! Aren't you ashamed to look your mother in the face?

YOUNG LUD. Mother! Oho! She knew a thing or two when she was young. Like my bride here. Well, keep your straw! the woods will serve as well. But I give notice, dad; I mean to quit. No penny-piece do you get from me, from this day forward. So good-bye, old blockhead. (*Singing.*) A bed of straw, a bed of moss. . . .

(YOUNG LUD *and his companion stagger out.* NED LUD *sits down with his head in his hands. Enter* JOHN WIBLEY.)

NED LUD. You're welcome, John.

JOHN WIBLEY. Now there's a man who feels for working folk! Ned, you brought Mary home to-day. You brought—Mary—home.

NED LUD. Let be, John. Say no more. I am no parson. I know what poverty means.

JOHN WIBLEY. Their pleasure shall be paid for—yes, in bloody tears!

NED LUD. Our women have been plundering the bakers' shops.

JOHN WIBLEY. They have done well. Did you see Ure?

NED LUD. This morning.

JOHN WIBLEY. Well, what news?

NED LUD. None of the best.

JOHN WIBLEY. Will all of us be taken on again?

NED LUD. Seventy-five in every hundred men must go. And no more ailing women will be wanted. All the children will be taken on. We asked what workless men should do. Well, well, said Mr. Ure, there was a hope, if trade looked up, of building bigger factories.

Meanwhile the men had time to think of the next world. And he went on to say machinery called for suppleness, not strength. Our hands, he said, were too big-boned, too hard about the knuckle-joints, too stiff and heavy to be suited to the engine.

JOHN WIBLEY. Good, good. We are to think of our immortal souls. And rub our hands with oil, maybe, to make them supple. A fine plan indeed! What wages does he offer?

NED LUD. Fivepence for children. Eightpence for women, and a shilling for the men.

JOHN WIBLEY. And the conditions?

NED LUD. They are hard, John. We must bind ourselves for one year's service. Ure can dismiss a weaver on the nod for scanty work or breach of regulations. If we break spool or shuttle, brush or can, we have to pay for them. And the fines! They're bigger than the wage. A penny for forgetting scissors. Threepence for quitting place at the machine. Fivepence for going out without permission of the foreman. Fourpence for talking to your neighbour, singing, whistling. We must live in Ure's cottages, and take his goods for half our earnings.

JOHN WIBLEY. Good, good. He makes us pay our wages back again in fines and rents. And what does Jimmy say to that?

NED LUD. Jimmy's advice is to agree. He says the master's days are numbered. In Blackburn, Bolton, Rochdale, Wigan, Derby, Manchester, the weavers are preparing. He says we must put off the fight till every town is ready.

(*A crowd of women presses in, among them* MARGARET. *The* FIRST WOMAN *throws loaves to the children out of her apron.*)

MARGARET. Here, children, fill your bellies. Seven lean years will come.

(*The children fall greedily on the bread.*)

NED LUD. Bread from the plundered shops! I won't allow it!

MARGARET. Ha, ha, he won't allow it! I could die of laughing! He won't allow it! The gentleman! The saint! Like chained-up dogs that fall upon a bone, your children gnaw their stolen crust. Well, take it from them, Ned! Now show your mettle. Take it from them—the stolen loaves—the bread of wickedness—ha, ha! What, tears! The man is crying. What do I see? The great Ned Lud, the man of iron, in tears!

(*Silence.*)

SECOND WOMAN. Is it true you counsel working at the engine?

NED LUD. It's true.

FIRST WOMAN. And that the men are bargaining with Ure?

NED LUD. We must have justice done to all. The engine's not our enemy.

FIRST WOMAN. What does that mean?

SECOND WOMAN. Can't you see? They leave us in the lurch.

JOHN WIBLEY. If you must have it so. We leave you in the lurch.

FIRST WOMAN. Ha, ha! And what of justice? We're for justice, too. And we'll not work for engines. Never, never!

JOHN WIBLEY. You must do it, for our sakes.

MARGARET. John Wibley! Wibley snivelling like a parson! Have none of you got marrow in your bones?

FIRST WOMAN. You hamstrung shufflers! Who would sleep a night with you?

NED LUD. Why do you rage? You women will be taken on. Ours is the hardest lot.

FIRST WOMAN. Oh, you can sweep the rooms, and cook the dinner, darn the socks. A noble trade for men!

NED LUD. And if you snap your fingers at Ure's terms, your children starve!

MARGARET. Then let them starve! I would they were unborn. Shall we have time for children now? Scarce time enough to suckle them. They'll grow up like a cuckoo-brood. We'll have to farm them out. Family! Mother-love! O, they do well to talk, our masters! What have our like to do with home and family? The weaving-stool is more to me than my own child. What do I know of children? That they cry for food!

FIRST WOMAN. Get our husbands bread, we say! Else we, the wives, will make a league against you!

JOHN WIBLEY. What would you do?

FIRST WOMAN. What would we do? Why, go to Ure and beg him to take women on in place of the remaining men. Try us and see. We have the hands for weaving. We can work for twenty hours a day, if need be. And for half your wages.

NED LUD. For shame! Would you betray your brothers and your trade?

FIRST WOMAN. Our trade—ha, ha! When our children eat the grass of poverty, are we to sing them lullabies of trade and brothers? Good brothers, save us!

SECOND WOMAN. We must have deeds.

NED LUD. Hear what Jimmy says: Jimmy means well by us. He speaks our mind; he tells us what we feel. Here, John, I am no talker, as you know. Tell them what Jimmy said to us.

JOHN WIBLEY. From boyhood's days I always fell asleep at sermon-time. 'Twas so with me last night. I'll not compare old parson's discourse with the sermon Jimmy gave us. But I woke when all was over.

SECOND WOMAN. We are no men, to hang upon the lips of vagabond preachers!

FIRST WOMAN. We give you two days' grace, you flabby-guts!

(*The women go.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. But Jimmy says we must submit.

NED LUD. Only no treachery! We must stand united. Else we

are blades that bend to every breeze. Our strength is in the mass.

JOHN WIBLEY. Do you know that Ure has brought two hundred unemployed from Carlton? They're working in the factory.

NED LUD. The scabs!

JOHN WIBLEY. I spoke with Jimmy on the matter.

NED LUD. And what did he advise?

JOHN WIBLEY. Patience.

NED LUD. Patience! That can't be!

JOHN WIBLEY. Jimmy knows nothing of a workman's pride. He is no workman, though he takes our part. Why, he can read and write like gentlefolks!

NED LUD. We must defend ourselves!

JOHN WIBLEY. Aye, so say all the rest. To-night we gather by the smaller shed. We'll notch a score or two of black sheep, never fear!

NED LUD. To-night, you say?

JOHN WIBLEY. At nine o'clock.

NED LUD. I shall be there.

JOHN WIBLEY. Whatever Jimmy says?

NED LUD. My name's Ned Lud. Are all the comrades warned?

JOHN WIBLEY. All except Bobby. I must see him now. (*At the door.*) I met one of Ure's book-keepers. He told me Jimmy's always in and out there. He even said 'twas Jimmy counselled Ure to bring the men from Carlton. But that I don't believe.

(JOHN WIBLEY *goes out.* NED LUD *and* MARGARET *remain. A silence.*)

MARGARET. It seems a spell is on us, since the engine came to town. But there was sense in what the women said.

NED LUD (*angrily*). Margaret!

MARGARET. Flabby-guts you are! You pray with pious faces while your womenfolk and children perish. Ned Lud will empty slops. I'll give you an old petticoat. Here, pull it on and grin!

(*A child's cry is heard. She runs to the straw.*)

The babe! The babe! O, God in Heaven, my babe is in a fit! He's dead!

NED LUD. Stock still we stand, while heavy things spin round us. There's the machine—and there—and there—— How clear all seemed while Jimmy spoke! And now—— Back to the soil were best for us. The city runs like poison in our veins. Townsmen break faith. We must have earth again. So we should have a homeland. We are like the lepers. Like trees whose roots are cut. They stand against the storm, and yet they wither.

CURTAIN

ACT FIVE

Scene I

A street in Nottingham, at dusk. The shapes of the houses are blurred. The scene passes like a ghostly flicker.

John Wibley. In two hours' time. Why do you start?

Albert (*with a shiver*). The engine!

John Wibley. Jimmy is in the master's pay.

Albert. It was the engine bought him!

John Wibley. Albert, what if we did more than hunt the blacklegs out? What if we took up the fight against our enemy, the engine?

Albert. That would save us! That would save us!

John Wibley. You're with us, then?

Albert. To the last drop of blood. But Jimmy's cast a spell upon the men.

John Wibley. Ha, ha! Fine words that warmed their cockles for a night! Already they are muttering at Ure's terms. Already they are asking whether Jimmy's hands are clean. Already they are whispering tales of snares and pitfalls. Let them but look the engine in the face, and Jimmy's counsel will be blown away like chaff! The women do their part. See to the women, Albert; ply them well! Jimmy will not be in the mill to-night. He thinks we meet to-morrow.

Albert. The women, first to shout and first to run! But Ned Lud's different. I'd a dog once that set his teeth in a goat's neck. I had to beat him dead before he loosed his hold. Ned Lud is such a man.

John Wibley. Do you know Henry Cobbett is Jimmy's brother?

Albert. You told me that. But Jimmy has no truck with home.

John Wibley. No matter. We shall gain Ned Lud. And if Ned Lud stands in with us, then, Jimmy, watch yourself!

Albert (*crying out*). O God!

John Wibley. What's to do?

Albert (*terror-struck*). There's some one near us listening. The engine's near us!

John Wibley. You give a man the creeps. Befriend me, night! We shall win through.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

Scene II

An old potato shed, with straw on the floor. Jimmy *sits on the straw, writing. The* Beggar *comes in.*

Beggar. So you are there?

Jimmy. Why, are they looking for me?

Beggar. No, friend. Just the other way about.

Jimmy. The other way about?

Beggar. The seekers have gone dancing.

Jimmy. None of your riddles!

Beggar. What are you doing there?

Jimmy. Writing a pamphlet.

Beggar. Pamphlets—drifting sand. They stop the eyes and ears, but go no deeper. Say, friend, are you sure of your men?

Jimmy. They are working men.

Beggar. No less men for that.

Jimmy. Working men keep faith.

Beggar. Some of them, maybe. But all? There's a question. Do all men keep their word, are all men brave and true? No. Then why working men? Because they work? Look at them as they are, and not as you would have them be. These are your new gods, called "holy workmen." True gods, pure gods, wise gods, perfect gods—English weavers of 1815. Aye, so you dream. My friend, the man who fights with gods for comrades will ride to victory as surely as an apple-blossom comes to fruit. Open your eyes and see that they are only men, good and bad, greedy and generous, petty and great-hearted—and yet try your luck with them. If you win through and they change their nature in the fight, I take off my hat to you. Always providing that I have a hat. For yours is gone. It was drowned. It lies in a warm place. If you refuse to see men as they are, never speak to me of treachery or ingratitude.

Jimmy. The workers fight for justice.

Beggar. I have lived under three governments. All governments cheat the people, some more, others less. Those that cheat them least are called good governments.

Jimmy. You're a Jeremiah.

Beggar. Jimmy, you're an educated workman. That means an aristocrat. All aristocrats have the itch to rule. And workmen, too, have their aristocrats. Now don't jump down my throat, friend. For if you have the itch to rule, you may be one of those who do it well. Aye, very well.

Jimmy (*laughs. After a silence*). Do you know John Wibley?

Beggar. Wibley with the hump?

Jimmy. John Wibley.

Beggar. His father drank me under the table. And that's no small matter. When he came home drunk he used to beat his wife and children. One night he threw John against the wall as you might

throw a cat. The boy lay where he fell. When he came to his feet he was a cripple. The mother hanged herself because she had stolen a loaf from the baker's, and stood in fear of being jailed. The baker said she took three loaves, but we know the bakers. They say they bake rye bread, but the rye often stinks of powdered alum.

JIMMY. Do the weavers look up to John Wibley?

BEGGAR. He can be masterful.

JIMMY. What does that mean?

BEGGAR. O, he can rule the roost, has a good pair of jaws, and threw a stone once at the manager's back—but that was after dark.

JIMMY. And is his boy a cripple?

BEGGAR. No more than other weavers' children. The midwives say they hardly know whether the new-born babes have bones. They feel like rubber.

JIMMY. If we could but save the children! This future generation eaten to the marrow!

(*A silence.*)

BEGGAR. And you would lead men! Let me laugh! Run to the vicar; get him to make you colonel of a regiment of angels! This man would lead others, and can't see what is happening under his nose!

JIMMY. What is happening?

BEGGAR. Why, man, the mares are calving, the rose-bushes are sprouting lilies, and men and women crying "Halleluja, our new prophet!"

JIMMY. What does that mean?

BEGGAR. Halleluja, new prophet!

JIMMY. Answer me!

BEGGAR. Halleluja, new prophet! (*He sets a plaited wreath of straw on* JIMMY'S *head.*) All hail!

JIMMY. Away with your trash!

BEGGAR (*suddenly*). Hush! Do you hear?

JIMMY. I hear nothing.

BEGGAR. Put your head in the straw and listen.

JIMMY. I hear a rustling.

BEGGAR. Hush!

JIMMY. Yes, it rustles.

BEGGAR. Man, you sit on a volcano and say "It rustles." It crashes! It thunders! It flashes fire, it blazes brimstone, it bubbles murder. Says the great leader, "It rustles."

JIMMY. Are you crazed?

BEGGAR (*imitating the sound of marching men*). Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

JIMMY. A drop too much.

BEGGAR. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp!

JIMMY. The taverns should be closed——

BEGGAR. And babes in arms should not be breeched too soon——

JIMMY. Or dotards given a rattle——

BEGGAR. To whimper over the ingratitude of men.

JIMMY. You're hiding something from me?

BEGGAR. So you're awake at last! Up with you, Jimmy! To-night your workmen smash the engine.

JIMMY. You lie!

BEGGAR. John Wibley is their leader.

JIMMY. It is false!

BEGGAR. Be off with you to London, man from cloud-land, before they do to you what they are doing to King Steam!

JIMMY. Where—where shall I find them?

BEGGAR. Why, at his Court.

JIMMY. Farewell——

BEGGAR (*calling after him*). Take care, my friend; take care! If they lose belief in you, they'll hang you. If they feel they're in the wrong, they'll hang you first. You've forgotten your crown, Jimmy! And your shirt too! May I keep it? He's out of hearing. These men who would conquer the world, with gods to help them! I'll take the shirt for luck. It's two years since I wore one. The man who wears a shirt feels a lord. But the man who wears none, and has a pint of liquor in him, feels a king. I'll have no truck with lordship when a kingdom beckons. Sir innkeeper, I confer this shirt upon thee, and make thee my cupbearer. Why, even a lord would scratch himself, if he lived in this palace.

(*The stage is darkened.*)

SCENE III

The factory by moonlight, with a gigantic steam-engine and mechanical looms, at which children and a few women are seated. Beside the engine are two men. Amid the sounds of machinery are heard the hum of the transmitters, the clear tone of the running crank-shafts, the deep rumble of the levers, and the regular whirr and rattle of the shuttles. Stokers tend the furnace.

HENRY (*as Overseer*). Nine o'clock gone! All hands to work! (*To a little girl.*) You there! Do you hear me?

LITTLE GIRL. I can never sleep in daytime, sir—and now I can scarcely keep my eyes open——

(HENRY *strikes her with a strap. She seats herself and goes on with her work. A boy comes in.*)

HENRY. Two minutes past the hour. Two minutes late for work. There's twopence off your earnings. Set about it! (*Boy goes to his place. A pause.*) Doors closed! (*A woman shuts the door. Knocking.*) Who's there?

VOICE. Mary Anne Walkley.

HENRY. Twelve minutes past the hour, by factory time. The doors are closed at ten past. You wait until the next shift starts at one o'clock. It will be entered in your punishment book. You lose half a day's wages.

VOICE. O, sir, I was unwell to-day——

HENRY. That's no concern of mine. The regulations are my business. Paragraph One of standing orders! (*Steps are heard going away; then fresh knocking.*) Who's there?

VOICE. Ure!

HENRY (*obsequious*). Very good, sir. Directly, sir.

(*He opens.* URE *enters with his* GUEST, *a Government representative.*)

URE. All in order?

HENRY. Quite in order, sir.

URE. Are all the hands full-timers?

HENRY. Yes, sir. All of them, sir.

URE (*to his* GUEST). Here you see the factory. Agents of our foreign rivals nickname it "the house of dread" or "the shambles"; but agitators love strong language. It's true machinery disciplines the rebel hand; for that we may be grateful. . . . Look at the children, my dear sir. Do you see any signs of weariness, ill-usage, discontent? How their eyes sparkle! How they enjoy the light play of their muscles! How they revel in the natural suppleness of youth! Ah, they have life before them! How charming the nimble movement with which this little girl ties up a broken thread! How all of them rejoice to show their skill before my guest! An artist's satisfaction, is it not?

GUEST. And yet one hears it said that children's wages are too low.

URE. The claptrap of the theorists, my dear sir. Wages *must* be low. Low wages are the manufacturer's only defence against the parent's greed. Believe me, they would send their sucklings to the mill if we would let them. There are no greater sharks than working parents. They batten on their children's health and strength.

GUEST. But are not night-shifts harmful to the children's health?

URE. Not in the least. Besides, we have no choice; the competition is too keen. If we dispensed with night-shifts the mills would soon be altogether idle.

GUEST. Parliament proposes to limit child labour to thirteen hours a day.

URE. Parliament, my dear sir, Parliament! Such legislation means an end to freedom. We must allow the worker liberty to choose his hours.

GUEST. And have the children intervals for meals?

URE. To our sincere regret we are unable to make this concession. The furnaces, you see, have to be stoked continually. The waste of coal would be criminal.

GUEST. And is the overseer an ex-workman?

URE. Yes, an ex-workman. We must make way for the man with

brains, provided he is honest, obedient, hard-working, sound in wind and limb. We have always found that ex-workmen give the best results as overseers. They soon throw off all relationship to their former fellows. They are assimilated, so to speak. We find them reliable and unyielding in their strictness—the very best of servants.

GUEST. An uplifting reflection. And when do you think this foolish strike will be abandoned?

URE. The end may come at any moment. We have hands enough at our disposal—unemployed weavers from Carlton and orphan children from the poorhouse, who are used to the machine. But a senseless spirit of rebellion is abroad among our lower orders. The dangerous, romantic moonshine of English liberalism, fostered by vain and workshy scribblers. We want to do our best for all our hands. They too are Christians. That is not to be forgotten. We are but human. And our reward? Our reward is ingratitude, my dear sir. Come!

(URE *and his* GUEST *leave the factory.*)

HENRY. Get on with your work, and quit staring! (*To a boy.*) You whistled something. What's your tune?

BOY. Britons never shall be slaves.

HENRY. Your name goes down in the punishment book. A penny fine. What do I see? Hey!

(*He goes to a stool where a little girl has fallen asleep, huddled up.*)

This sinful world! The creature goes to sleep at work! Hey!

(*He shakes her roughly. The girl wakes with a start and goes on weaving mechanically. Loud knocking at the door.*)

THE ENGINEER (*outside*). Open, open! (*He is admitted.*) A mob of weavers armed with picks and shovels—at the factory gate——

HENRY. All keep your places at the loom! (*To a child.*) Run to the Town Hall, you.

(*The child slips out. The shouts of the mob are heard as they approach. Knocking, then banging, on the door.*)

CRIES. Open! Open!

(*The door is forced. Among the mob who break into the shed are* NED LUD, JOHN WIBLEY, CHARLES, GEORGE, EDWARD, ALBERT, ARTHUR.)

CRIES. Scabs, all of you! To hell with blacklegs! Down with the Judas overseer!

(*The women and children from the looms shrink away into a corner.*)

CRIES. Why, they're children!

ALL. Children!

A CRY. Look at the iron man!

(*The mob see the engine. They are overwhelmed by wonder and stand transfixed. There is a sudden silence.*)

NED LUD. So grind the mills of God, maybe!
HENRY. Engineer! Engineer! Good God, my place is lost!
ENGINEER. Stop working! Shut off steam!

(*The engine stops. He leaps on to the bridge.*)

What would you do,
You simpletons? Fly out at Providence?
You trod the looms like galley-slaves, with limbs
Bent crooked by the load of drudgery.
The engine's your salvation! Even now
The boiler quivers on the glowing coals,
Pregnant with steam! One touch is all it needs!
The engine quickens! Energy is born!

(*He pulls a lever. With a sound like a human sigh the machinery begins to work.*)

The fly-wheels waken, stretch themselves,
Whirl in a humming melody!
The sliding pulleys tug their belts.
One touch! the frame of yarn is warp'd,
Another, and the weft is thrown!
No felting now with weary hands,
The shuttles fly to work, and set
The bobbins reeling fast. One touch,
The engine's tamed! It comes to rest.

(*He stops the machinery.*)

Maker and master is the Mind
Of man. Maker and master!
Who fights against machinery
Is godlike Reason's enemy!
The Demon Steam is overthrown
By right of numbers, and the power
Pluck'd from the tyrant's throne is made
Obedient to his former subjects!
Once you were slaves to elements
But now their masters, royal masters!
And in Creation's last high hour
The bow of freedom spans the sky,
Your arch of promise. Man becomes
The captain of his earth!

(JOHN WIBLEY *leaps on to a bench.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. You stare like men benumb'd, or turn'd to stone,
Look on that spawn of hell, and pay no heed
To Master Understrapper. Have you all forgot
What Albert said to you?

CHARLES. The engine binds us fast!
GEORGE. It hews our living body into pieces!
EDWARD. We were free men!
WILLIAM. The masters of the loom!
ALBERT. We wove Heaven's flowers into our handiwork!
JOHN WIBLEY. Is this base labour worthy of a man?
Set clockwork dolls to mind machinery,
Not Britons!
ENGINEER. 'Tis a fruitless war you wage.
In all the towns of England and abroad
Machinery awakes to mighty life.
It points the forward road that we must march.
JOHN WIBLEY. The man who counsels service to that engine
Means ill by us! Remember Ure's conditions!
NED LUD. Remember Jimmy too.
JOHN WIBLEY. He counselled patience.
Patience! The language that all traitors hold!
We are to sell ourselves for evermore,
And who dares say to us "Have patience"?
What truck have we with State and Parliament?
We battle with our nearest enemy,
The engine in the mill. Will you be slaves?
WORKMEN. No!
JOHN WIBLEY. Arms, legs and feet? Or jacks and screws and hammers?
WORKMEN. No, no!
ALBERT. We want to work as we were used to do!
JOHN WIBLEY. So we shall gain the mastery for ourselves!
NED LUD. We gave our word to Jimmy.
JOHN WIBLEY. To a traitor!
NED LUD. That is false.
JOHN WIBLEY. Ure's hireling, Henry Cobbett
Betrayed us first, and Jimmy is his brother.
CRIES. That's true! That's true!
NED LUD. And Jimmy is his brother?
JOHN WIBLEY. Why do you flinch? If you are not with us,
If you're afraid, then go!
NED LUD. What, I! afraid?
JOHN WIBLEY. Think of your wife!
CHARLES. Your children!
GEORGE. Or the devil!
WILLIAM. Think of the Tyrant Steam!
EDWARD. Our women fight!
CHARLES. They set three thieving bakers on the run!
TOM. While we do naught but prate.
ARTHUR. What should we do?
JOHN WIBLEY. Now, Lud, a deed to prove that you're our friend!
The old mark offers. Death to the machine!

(*A sudden silence falls.* NED LUD *goes up to the steam engine. The overseer, strike-breakers, women and children take flight.*)

NED LUD. So Henry Cobbett is his brother?
Death to the devil's brood—and death!

(*He strikes the engine. The blow falls on the starting lever, and the machinery begins to work. The looms are set in motion. The workmen shrink back in consternation.*)

CHARLES (*crying out*). 'Tis witchcraft! Devilry!
ARTHUR (*after a pause*). I can't speak like John and Jimmy—but—but I can take a spade in hand and—and summon up my pluck—and mark my man—and—strike! (*He hacks at the engine. The fly-wheel catches him. He cries out.*) Oh, mother! Mother!

(*The workmen shrink away. Stupor seems to overtake them.*)

EDWARD. The enemy of mankind has swallowed him!
NED LUD. The enemy of mankind has taken him to itself. (*He sees a workman stealing a copper vessel.*) Now give that here! No thieving! Would you steal from a dead enemy on the field? We are at war, mark that. The laws of war hold good. Looters are shot. What are you laughing at? Is it a laughing matter when you kill a man in battle? We stand and gibber at a shadow, brothers. On! (*He rushes at the machine and strikes.*) You hag! You devil-spawn!

(*The others, shamed into action in spite of their fear, rush upon the engine. It is shattered by their blows.*)

CRIES. Hey, chain us up, old man of iron! Juggernaut! Break our backs for us!

(*A storm has arisen. The doors are blown to by a gust of wind, and the lamps are put out. In the gloom is heard an outburst of fitful, crazy laughter.*)

ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
GEORGE. Almighty God! The engine's *laughing* at us!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
CRIES. Run! Run!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
CRY. The door! Where is the door!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha—Hihuhaha!
CRIES. The wind holds it fast! The wind's in league with Satan
ENGINEER (*on the bridge, as if in a frenzy*). Hihuhaha!
I say to you the engine is not dead!
It lives! It lives! It reaches out a claw
To clutch the hearts of men. Hihuhaha!
Against the villages roll marching hosts,
The fields are wither'd by their sulphurous breath,
And stony wastes are left where children die,

And men are govern'd by a cruel clock
That beats a doleful time—tick-tack, tick-tack
For morning, noon and night—tick-tack, tick-tack.
One shall be arm, another leg, a third
Brain—but the soul, the soul is dead.
ALL. The soul,
The soul is dead!

(*A silence.*)

ENGINEER. Hihuhaha! Hihuhaha!
VOICES. He laughs! He is bewitched!
A CRY. The spirit of the engine has possessed him!
ENGINEER. Hihuhaha! Hihuhaha!
The greedy jaws of war will gape for men
And nations will be fodder—brothers foes,
And justice outlaw'd, order piled in dust!
Against their Mother Earth her children rise
To slay her creatures and uproot her woods,
Her godlike creatures and her godlike woods,
And shame her motherhood—the end is dust!
JOHN WIBLEY. Grab hold of him! He has the evil eye!
He is possessed!
ALBERT. Do for him!
CRIES. Strike him dead!
ENGINEER. Strike him dead! Hihuhaha!

(*Confusion. They try to catch the* ENGINEER. *Workmen pursue workmen in the darkness; the* ENGINEER *runs hither and thither. Then voices in quick succession.*)

ENGINEER (*in the foreground*). Machine—machine! Hihuhaha!
Hihuhaha!
CRY. Not me! Spare me!
ENGINEER (*from the background*). I show the way, and I am born
in blood,
Hihuhaha, hihuhaha!
CRY. Yonder! Yonder he runs!
CRY. Not me! Spare me!
ENGINEER (*from the bridge*). I am no enemy. No enemy of yours!
Hihuhaha! Hihuhaha!
CRY. He stabbed me!
ENGINEER (*as if from a distance*). For ever crucified—hihuhaha!
NED LUD. The Last Day comes!
ENGINEER (*loudly*). Out of the deep I cry!
GEORGE. A man is hanging at the window!
CHARLES. 'Tis the Engineer!
ALBERT. 'Tis Death!
NED LUD. He was possessed—his life fulfilled.

(*A silence* JIMMY *rushes in.*)

JIMMY. You played your brothers false, you perjurers!

CRIES. Scatter his brains! Pluck out his guts!

JIMMY. You broke your oath. Our league was made by Englishmen. You played it false.

JOHN WIBLEY. Fine words to catch fine birds. Are you the brother of Ure's overseer?

JIMMY. What does that matter?

JOHN WIBLEY. Answer yes or no!

JIMMY. Yes!

CRIES. Traitor! Traitor!

JOHN WIBLEY. Who mocked our womenfolk—your brother or a stranger?

JIMMY. My brother—and a stranger.

JOHN WIBLEY. The web is woven.

CRIES. He would have bound us fast to Tyrant Steam! The devil's drudge!

JIMMY. Let me tell you——

CRIES. Not a word!

NED LUD. I would have staked my head on this man's faith.

JOHN WIBLEY. And would you leave the traitor's tongue, the traitor's eyes, to live? Pull his tongue from his mouth! Tear his eyes from their sockets!

NED LUD. Traitor!

(*He fells* JIMMY *with a blow of his fist.* JIMMY *looks at him quietly.* NED LUD *draws back.* JOHN WIBLEY *goes up to* JIMMY *and spits on him.*)

JOHN WIBLEY. Take that, if you're thirsty! A stirrup-cup before you start for hell!

JIMMY. Brute! (*He raises himself.*)
I held you for free men, but you were slaves,
All slaves! The masters bought your womenfolk
While you went cap in hand for wages. Slaves!
Cramm'd into uniforms, you cried Hurrah
And stood at the salute. Obedient slaves!
The deed you did to-day is but a deed
Of slaves who mutiny. What do you desire?
The power of your masters—slaves?
The tyranny of your masters—slaves?
The pleasures of your masters—slaves?
The man who flogs you on the road to freedom
Is made your chosen leader—slaves!

(*A silence.*)

Brothers, forgive my passion—brother slaves,
There was no man to teach you otherwise.

You fought, but you mistook your enemy.
O brothers, if the working folk of England
Are faithless to their calling, and neglect
To join the workers of the continent,
The workers of the world in fellowship,
To build the house of human brotherhood,
Then you are slaves until the end of time!

JOHN WIBLEY. What, mum! Are you milk-livered, all of you! The tongue from his mouth, the eyes from their sockets!

(*All except* JOHN WIBLEY *rush upon* JIMMY, *and beat him to death.* JOHN WIBLEY *turns away. A silence.*)

NED LUD (*going up to* JOHN WIBLEY). John, why were you the one to stand aside?

JOHN WIBLEY. I struck him first and last, behind the neck.

NED LUD. That's false.

JOHN WIBLEY. And are you grieved that he is dead?

NED LUD. I grieve for nothing, since he was a traitor. But 'twas you who shouted "The tongue from his mouth, his eyes from their sockets!"

JOHN WIBLEY (*trembling*). His eyes! And did you do it?

NED LUD. You were not even looking on!

JOHN WIBLEY. I—I——

NED LUD. Ah, now I understand! You cowardly cur!

(*He takes* JOHN WIBLEY *by the collar and drags him to the body.*)

You bellowed "Strike him dead!" and struck not once!

JOHN WIBLEY. I—can't abide the sight of blood—oh—oh——

NED LUD. What! You would swill blood and can't abide the sight of it! Blood—and blood—and blood—and daren't look on! You cried for murder and would strike no blow. You miserable coward! I could strangle you, but for your slimy neck! What have we done?

BEGGAR (*rushing in*). Jimmy! News for you!

NED LUD. Jimmy is dead.

BEGGAR. You've killed him?

NED LUD. Yes.

BEGGAR. And why?

CHARLES. His brother is Ure's overseer.

BEGGAR. And Jimmy?

NED LUD. His helper.

BEGGAR. Dolts, boobies, clodhoppers! You have killed a man who left mother and brother for your sakes, who forsook place and name for your sakes! But whom will you not kill—poor human creatures?

(*A silence.*)

GEORGE. Murdered, and none knows why.

WILLIAM. Murdered because a voice cried blood.

EDWARD. Murdered because a voice cried treachery.

NED LUD. Because that man cried treachery! What have we done?

GEORGE. That man?

NED LUD. John Wibley.

GEORGE. Where?

NED LUD. But there—there stood John Wibley—but a moment since——

WILLIAM. He's hopped the twig! He's flown!

NED LUD. What have we done?

GEORGE. He runs to Ure, maybe. He whimpers "I was not the one to strike the blow." He plots against us, and betrays his brothers for the thirty silver pieces!

BEGGAR. Thirty pieces—that's as may be. But I know that he betrays you, and he plots with Ure.

NED LUD. What have we done?

BEGGAR. The hour to beat your breasts was earlier, my masters. I came to tell you the police are on the way. One murder is enough. (*Knocking at the door.*) Too late!

VOICE OF THE OFFICER. Give yourselves up! The factory is surrounded!

NED LUD. Imprison us! We know what we have done!
We will pay forfeit for the man we slew!
But after us will come men better school'd,
More faithful, braver, to take up the fight
Against the rightful foe—and they will conquer!
Your Kingdom totters, masters of the world!

(*The door is opened, and the workmen leave the factory singing their weavers' song defiantly.* POLICE *are seen outside. For a while the stage is empty, then* OLD REAPER *and* TEDDY *enter.* OLD REAPER *shoulders his stick like a rifle.*)

OLD REAPER. Is God in sight?

TEDDY. Here's the machine, grandfather.

OLD REAPER. The hour draws near. He is the engine! God is the engine!

TEDDY. Grandfather, here's some one lying on the ground. It's Uncle Jimmy!

OLD REAPER (*taking aim*). Bang!

TEDDY. But look—but look—all torn—all torn!

OLD REAPER (*seeing* JIMMY'S *body*). Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

TEDDY. Home, grandfather! I'm afraid!

OLD REAPER. No need to be afraid, my children, any more. There is an end to grief. I've shot him—I, a bondsman's son. This evening at the setting of the sun I shot him. There he lies. Our Son, upon the earth, all bruised and broken. Where shall we bury him? In God's acre? To the knackers with him! (*Coming nearer.*) Ah, but

how he lies there, how he lies there! And his eyes, his eyes! You poor dear Son of Man! Present arms! Poor dear Son of Man! I have lived to see the day of deeds—and now 'tis past. I'm weary of this life. Ah, poor dear Son! (*He bends weeping over* JIMMY'S *body and kisses it.*) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. Ah, poor dear Son! We must bury him. We must be good to one another.

CURTAIN

TRANSFIGURATION

A Play, translated by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

ALARUM

Shatter the cup, the blinding crystal cup,
Its magic spills
As thick as pollen from the blackened hearts
Of blood-red tulips.

We wandered in a twilight world of wonder,
Touching with gentle hands the legends there;
Building great dream cathedrals
Of sunshine and of faith,
While roses fell around us . . .

Sudden a screaming discord: Murder!

Heavy with dreams and blind we stood,
With horror ringing in our ears.
Mankind cried out.

We saw vulgarity run mad;
Our feet were set on quicksands of despair.
A man cried out.

A man, a brother,
Moulded by suffering and joy,
By mad illusion and disdain;
A man, temple of the will,
Of rapturous joy and holy sorrow.
We heard the fierce and urgent cry:
The way!
The way!

O poet, lead us.

CHARACTERS

FRIEDRICH
PEOPLE
FRIEDRICH'S SISTER
HIS MOTHER
HIS UNCLE
HIS FRIEND
GABRIELE (The Friend's Sister)
FIRST SOLDIER
SECOND SOLDIER
WOUNDED SOLDIERS
MADMAN
CORPORAL
HOSPITAL NURSE
DOCTOR
OFFICER
BEGGAR-WOMAN
HER HUSBAND
CHAIRMAN
OLD GENTLEMAN (Anti-Pacifist)
PROFESSOR
PRIEST
AGITATOR
STUDENT
GIRL STUDENT
MAN WITH THE TURNED-UP COLLAR
SICK MAN
WOMAN
DEATH AS THE ENEMY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE GUISE OF A SOLDIER, A PROFESSOR, A JUDGE, A NIGHT VISITOR
SOLDIERS
CRIPPLES
NURSES
HOSPITAL ORDERLIES
SKELETONS
PRISONERS

The Scenes "Troop-train," "No-man's Land," "The Wounded Soldiers," "The Lodger," "Death and Resurrection," the "Mountaineers," are on the borderline between reality and unreality, to be thought of as scenes watched distantly in a dream.

The action takes place in Europe before the beginning of regeneration.
This work was begun in 1917, *in the third year of carnage. In its final form it was completed in February and March,* 1918, *in military prison.*

TRANSFIGURATION

THE BARRACKS OF THE DEAD

PROLOGUE: which can also be regarded as an Epilogue.

CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE

THE SKELETON FIGURE OF DEATH-BY-WAR
THE SKELETON FIGURE OF DEATH-BY-PEACE
SKELETONS

Night in a vast military cemetery. The graves, which are arranged in companies, are each marked by a simple grey cross of iron. Some of the crosses are decorated with a rose, others with a flaming heart, others with a little wreath of wild flowers. Apart from this they are all alike. Only the name and regiment is inscribed on the crosses of the private soldiers'; but at the side of every Company are the officers' graves marked by larger crosses decorated with flaming suns and each bearing the date of birth and civil occupation of the dead man. The skeleton figure of DEATH-BY-PEACE *enters wearing a top-hat and carrying a brightly coloured silk handkerchief. With him is the skeleton figure of* DEATH-BY-WAR *wearing a steel helmet and carrying in his hand a human thigh-bone—his Field-Marshal's baton. His breast is covered with orders.*

DEATH-BY-WAR. Well, here we are, old friend.
If only I had known you had trouble with your lungs
. . . However, believe me when I say I'm sorry . . .
I should hate to think
You regretted coming.
Well, here we are . . .
Everything nice and tidy
And in order.
There they are, buried by Companies;
Subalterns, N.C.O.'s and Privates
Just as in life—all quite correct.
Our gallant heroes!
The names are really quite superfluous,
But there they are—pure piety:
Numbers would have been enough.
And over there are the officers . . .
If you'd care to see who they were—
In civil life, I mean.
If you care to glance at them?

DEATH-BY-PEACE. Hm, hm, hm, hm!
Magnificent, my friend.
Magnificent!—I really mean it.
You make me quite envious.
DEATH-BY-WAR. You flatter me, dear friend.
I must confess
I thought your scepticism foolish:
I am familiar too with civil life.
But now I'm only too glad
To know you are convinced.
And now with your permission
We'll have them up on parade.
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Oh, certainly.
DEATH-BY-WAR. In Companies,
Forward
March!

From the graves the skeletons of dead officers and men arise wearing steel helmets. They stand stiffly at attention by their graves.)

Shoulder arms!

(*The skeletons snatch up their crosses and shoulder them; the officers hold theirs as though they were swords.*)

Attention!
Officers
Take command!

The officers hurry to the right, ranging themselves as Company leaders.

Dress by the right!
Eyes front! Quick march!
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Congratulations, sir! My heartiest congratulations!
Really, you know, it would be terrible
If I tried anything like this!
Thousands and thousands
Of women and children,
And a few old, halting greybeards
For officers,
Leaning on their umbrellas.
Yes, I must admit you have me beaten.
There is a certain order
In your life;
Mine is pure chaos.
DEATH-BY-WAR. Really, my friend, you flatter me.
Practice and discipline—that's all.
You could apply it too. . . .
In Companies, right wheel!
Halt!

Attention!
Stand at ease!
Senior officer forward!

(*A Colonel salutes and steps shakily forward.*)

Very good.
Lay down your arms!

(*They put back their crosses.*)

Attention!
Company,
Roll heads!
Colonel,
You will take charge.

(*The Soldiers, hands on hips, roll their skulls, supervised by the Company Commanders with the Colonel as Commander-in-Chief.*)

DEATH-BY-PEACE. You really thought of this yourself, my friend?
Your own idea?
DEATH-BY-WAR. How do you mean?
DEATH-BY-PEACE. All this business—
Did it originate entirely in your own skull?
That's all I mean . . .
DEATH-BY-WAR. I see. Well, well—
It's not so simple as it sounds . . .
How shall I put it?
I'm sure you'll understand . . .
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Yes, I see, I see.
But wait a moment.
DEATH-BY-WAR. Attention!
Company, dismiss!
Back to your grrraves!

(*The men return to their graves.*)

Thank you, gentlemen . . .
Criticism can wait until next time.

(*The Officers return to their graves. There is silence. Then suddenly* DEATH-BY-PEACE *bursts out laughing.*)

You surprise me, sir!
Did anything go wrong?
Was anything overlooked?

(DEATH-BY-PEACE *continues to guffaw, fanning himself with his bandana.*)

Explain yourself, sir!
Your laughter is insulting!
DEATH-BY-PEACE. Your humbug is insulting!
I was right to doubt your word—

I'm nothing but a fool to let myself
Be humbugged into admiration.
I called my kingdom chaos . . .
I did myself injustice.
I am the leveller
In whose eyes all are equal.
There are differences, of course—
The rich are sometimes tactless . . .
Still, such discipline as yours
Is foreign to our world.
You play at being victor,
You who yourself are vanquished—
Vanquished by war, my friend,
Conquered, and compelled
To die by numbers!
Officers, N.C.O.'s, military discipline—
A regular barracks!
You should have been a Sergeant Major!
Death subservient to a lot of Colonels—
Whatever next!
My friend, your bluff is called!
You'll be the general laughing stock
Unless you clear off quickly
While you can!

DEATH-BY-WAR. Infamous! Intolerable!
I refuse to argue!

DEATH-BY-PEACE. Just one small parodox
To bring this little interview
To a successful close . . .
You are a modern Death—
A product of the times,
Comparable to the futile living of to-day
Where everything is rotten under tinsel.
Good-bye, you petty, miserable Death,
Good-bye, you snobbish little hypocrite,
Propped up with military phrases.
Good-bye, and give my compliments
To your lords and masters,
The men of war!
Haha! Haha! Hahahaa!

(*He goes off shaking with laughter.*)

DEATH-BY-WAR (*stands dazed; then tears up a tuft of grass and wipes the sweat from his skull*). God damn his eyes!
It seems to me
I'm just about played out!

CURTAIN

FIRST STATION

Scene I

An ugly room in a town house with the furniture barely perceptible in the dusk of evening. Standing in the windows of the houses across the street are Christmas-trees lit up by candles. Friedrich *leans against the window-sill.*

Friedrich. They are lighting the candles. Candles of love. Mysteries reveal themselves, love reveals itself in the light of candles . . . while I, a Jew, outcast, struggle between one shore and the next, far from the old and farther from the new. A nasty hybrid. Wasn't there a sudden stirring of sympathy in the room when she said, come and see me? Many thanks, Fräulein—your humble servant—you may be sure I shall be punctual. Artificial smile to order! Tragi-comic puppet. . . . No—I'll no longer drag around this weariness. What are they to me—my people? Their blood is in my veins, but what is that to me? It is to you over there I belong—to you. A simple creature, ready to prove himself. There must be an end to all this compromise and self-division! An end to all this proud defence of what I really scorn! I must be brave.

(*His* Mother *enters.*)

Mother. Back at last, Friedrich? Where have you been all day?

Friedrich. Wandering, Mother. Wandering—as usual. Don't look at me like that, Mother . . . I've told you—wandering. Like him, Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew whose shadow crawls through fettered streets, who hides in dark and pestilential cellars, who gathers rotten swedes in the frozen fields at night. . . . Yes, it is him I seek; my great brother, Ahasuerus, the eternal wanderer, the homeless one . . .

Mother. You blaspheme against your name, Friedrich. You are not homeless.

Friedrich. Then where is my home, Mother? They have homes, over there; homes of their own to which they belong. Over there they are at one with themselves and with their homes . . . free from the weariness of life, the sickness which corrodes and poisons thought and feeling. . . . They can laugh, over there, and live with joy in their hearts. They have their own land in which they are rooted, for which they can live and die.

Mother. You are feverish, Friedrich.

Friedrich. Yes, I am feverish, Mother! Won't you give me a

sedative? If only you were feverish as I am! Now you are sad, Mother. Now you grieve because I have never been a good son—the good son who always smiles so lovingly upon his mother . . . like the good sons of all your friends. Oh, they are so touching, those tastefully composed family pictures from well-bred homes!

MOTHER. I refuse to talk to you, Friedrich. You are restless and full of foolish thoughts; and it's all because you are out of work. I don't want to hinder you in your ambition. Go on with your sculpture if you must. But first make some provision for your future. Take up some steady job to earn the money for your sculpture. I may say your uncle Richard agrees with me in all this.

FRIEDRICH. So Uncle Richard agrees! Well, well, well! And didn't he cite the case of Strindberg, who spent the last ten years of his life "a ruined man"? . . . Didn't he say how he regretted having missed a chance of immortality through Strindberg? Missed his opportunity to become "a figure in literary history," as he puts it so beautifully? Yes, if only he had given Strindberg a little money when he asked! If only he had done that, this righteous citizen! But if ever he met a second Strindberg he would soon decide he was nothing but a decadent dilettante and leave him to starve, calming his own agitated conscience by increased speculation on the Stock Exchange. Good, kind, business man!

MOTHER. Your father was also a good, kind business man, remember.

FRIEDRICH. I know, Mother, I know! Yes, he was kind and good, too. He left you to work and run the house while he went off on shooting parties . . . good, kind father! He would talk to me about living respectably, about the solid virtues. And when I wanted to get away—to get away from here—he forced me to stay. . . . He was my jailer!

MOTHER. Friedrich! I will not allow you to speak like that of your father. Believe me, Friedrich, your words hurt nobody but yourself. . . . However, you are upset to-day, and I have no desire to upset you further. . . . We will talk about it later when you are calmer. . . . Meanwhile I have just one thing to ask you, a tiny favour—just to please your old mother. Friedrich, I beg you to attend Divine Worship. People would be so . . .

FRIEDRICH. People! Why not be honest and call it Public Service, not Divine? What is your God but a cruel and narrow judge, judging all men by cut and dried laws? Judging always by the same dead laws? Divine Service—homage to bigotry! It's revolting! Are you any more free when you leave your House of God? No, no. . . . And the narrowness of this noble House of God is suffocating, I tell you, suffocating!

MOTHER. When your father died he left us very badly off. I scraped and saved to keep you, to send you to school, to make life easier for you than it had been for us. I slaved to make things easy for you in every conceivable way. You must understand: I am your mother,

you are my child. Everything I had was for my children. Nothing, nothing for myself.

FRIEDRICH. True, Mother, true. I could weep even to think of it. But am I ungrateful, am I quite a brute to you? No, I am not that, Mother. You cared for my material needs; you tried to make it easier for me to earn money now . . . yes, you have laid the foundations of my material future. But what have you done for my *soul*? You taught me to hate all who don't belong to our race. Why?

MOTHER. They do not like us. They only tolerate us. They despise us.

FRIEDRICH. Oh no, oh no! They are full of kindness, gentleness and love; all-embracing love. Look! See the candles they have lit over there—candles radiating love and kindness. . . . I called you mother because you bore me, but can I still call you mother when you leave my naked soul exposed, as foolish mothers leave their babes naked to the cold?

(*His* MOTHER *goes out silently.*)

Now a bond is snapped. . . . Or was it really broken all those years ago? . . . It had to break. . . . Mother . . . (*Silence.*) No, it's no use. . . . Now they are giving out the presents. The children are singing now. When did I ever sing here in my childhood—really sing?

(*His* FRIEND *enters.*)

FRIEND. Good evening, Friedrich! Gabriele asked me to come, and anyway I intended . . .

FRIEDRICH. Tell her I cannot come. I'm feverish, ill.

FRIEND. I don't like to leave you alone.

FRIEDRICH. No? Very kind, I'm sure. Thank you, thank you. . . . However, sit down—over there. Would you like to do a little bargain? A good table knife for a box of drawing tools? The compasses are admittedly a little faulty, but you'd hardly notice it. I've arranged them in the box so that they look all right.

FRIEND. Friedrich, why must you torment yourself like this, and me too?

(FRIEDRICH *embraces his* FRIEND *and begins to sob.*)

There, you poor fellow.

FRIEDRICH. I am not poor; and I don't want your sympathy. I don't need it. Nor your sister's either. I'll release her from the humiliation of being seen out with me. I've women enough over there in the narrow streets . . . I've enough money for that. But I don't need you. I am strong enough by myself. I need nobody, neither them nor you.

FRIEND. In that case I had better go. But you can always count on me.

FRIEDRICH. Count on you? Ask you for help? Never . . . !

FRIEND. No, I did not mean it like that. But before I go I had better tell you what I came for. . . . Special late night final—fighting has begun in the Colonies. They want volunteers. I wish I could go myself, but my people won't allow me to.

FRIEDRICH (*as though suddenly awakened*). Won't allow you ?—And you let the matter rest there ? You can't be serious. . . . They want volunteers. . . . Forgive me if I behaved like a brute just now. Forgive me if I spoke roughly. . . . Volunteers wanted. Release, release from stifling, barren, narrowness ! Oh, but the struggle will unite us all ! The greatness of the times will make us all great. . . . The resurrection of the spirit. . . . All pettiness forgotten, all childish limitations swept away. . . . Once more shall the spirit shine forth in its eternal beauty. . . . As for me—as for me, this is a Heaven-sent gift. . . . Volunteers wanted ! Was I half-hearted ? I feel myself strong ! Strong to embrace my duty. Now I can prove that I belong to you ! Now I can prove I'm no outsider ! . . . . Where can I enlist ? At the town-hall ?

(FRIEND *nods.*)

I am so happy, so happy. Apologize to Gabriele for me. I have found my country at last. Tell her that joy has come to me—joy on the evening of love. You see the Christmas-trees over there ? A tree in every window. . . . Tell Gabriele that I thank her from my heart ; and greet her for me. She will understand why I do not come myself ; she will understand and be glad. (*Rushing out.*) Now I can prove myself, prove myself !

Darkness.

SCENE II

Compartment of a travelling troop-train. Badly burning oil-lamps shed a meagre, flickering light on the sleeping SOLDIERS *huddled close together. With them one silent soldier* (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*) *and another with a skull for a head : both shadowy figures.*

FIRST SOLDIER. How long must we rattle through the night.
Lurching, lurching in the grinding of machinery,
Tortured machinery ?

SECOND SOLDIER. Time without end and space without end,
Days, weeks, nobody can tell.
Would that I lay sleeping in my mother's womb.

THIRD SOLDIER. Would that an earthquake had swallowed up the house
When my mother lay in my father's arms.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Would that a fiery ball from Heaven
Had struck down the man who lured
My mother to the wood.

FIFTH SOLDIER. Words, foolish words! Year after year
The bitter coffin holds us here enclosed;
Year after year the flesh falls away,
Human flesh stinking and decayed.
SIXTH SOLDIER. Aimlessly we wander, like frightened children
Driven by a senseless tyranny,
Murdering, hungering, creatures of violence—
Children, frightened children,
Overtaken by a long dark night.
SEVENTH SOLDIER. If only I could pray. Kind and sweet words
Which my mother so tenderly taught me,
Babbled now with careless lips and cruel . . .
FIRST SOLDIER. Endlessly we journey.
SECOND SOLDIER. Endlessly the engine roars and groans.
THIRD SOLDIER. Endlessly we marry, endlessly we breed;
And evil springs eternally from lust.
FOURTH SOLDIER. Stars spring from the womb of Time
And Time eternally is ravaged and gives birth.
FIFTH SOLDIER. Endlessly rotting.
SIXTH SOLDIER. Endlessly children in fear of the father.
SEVENTH SOLDIER. Sacrificed by mothers, shivering, cold.
ALL. Endlessly journeying,
Endlessly . . .

CURTAIN

SECOND STATION

Scene III

An hour before sunset. A water-hole in the desert.

First Soldier. Dusk is falling, but the heat is as thick as a blanket. Is the boss asleep?

Second Soldier. Why shouldn't he sleep? Tent pitched, mosquito-net put up, while he stood watching with his hands in his pockets —now he's sleeping.

First Soldier. They can sing if they want to. I've had enough for to-day.

Wounded Man. Water!

First Soldier. Give him water!

(Friedrich *gives him water.*)

Wounded Man. Take the corpses away. Everywhere I go there's corpses.—You want to saw my leg off? It hurts all right.—But I wanted to be a dancing master, *one*, two three . . . *one*, two, three—that's how a waltz goes.

Friedrich. Try to sleep, chum!

Wounded Man. But take the corpses away. I don't want to teach them to dance . . . they . . . are . . . tormenting . . . me . . . I suppose I'd better though . . . Won't anybody strike up? . . . (*sings*) *one* . . . two, three, *one* . . . two, three—that's how a waltz goes.

Friedrich. Try to sleep. Give me your hand. I won't hurt you. I'll put a cool wet cloth on your forehead. Dreams will come and ask you to dance, garlanded dreams—they'll dance with you over the heather, and away to your home.

Wounded Man (*sings*). *One* . . . two, three, . . . *one* . . . two, three . . .

Friedrich. Oh God!

First Soldier. Why bring Him into it? He's all right for the officers, bringing true religion to the heathen with fire and murder. I am the Redeemer, rejoice in Me! Only let them blow your brains out and you'll find eternal bliss!

Friedrich. It must be; it must be!

Second Soldier. What must be? Fire and murder? Or hospitals and mad-houses?

Friedrich. For our country's sake!

First Soldier. Country? I don't know so much about country.

All I know are toffs flinging money about and workers sweating to save it.

FRIEDRICH. But how could you live without a country? I'd go mad with all this horror if I couldn't grit my teeth and say "It's all for my country."

SECOND SOLDIER. You're a funny one to talk like that.

FRIEDRICH. Why any funnier than you?

FIRST SOLDIER. And you a foreigner? Ha, ha!

FRIEDRICH. I'm not a foreigner. I'm one of you.

SECOND SOLDIER. If you fought with us a thousand times you'd still be a foreigner.

FIRST SOLDIER (*calmly*). There's a curse on you. You're a man without country.

WOUNDED MAN. A man . . . with . . . out . . . a . . . coun . . . try . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . that's . . . how . . . a waltz goes . . .

FRIEDRICH. Haven't I proved myself, on duty here and at home, in raids and on guard?—haven't I proved that I'm one of you?—Have I ever panicked and run away? Have I ever skulked in shell-holes?

SECOND SOLDIER. You're still a foreigner.

FRIEDRICH. Then I'll have to fight for my country in spite of you. For who can rob me of it? I carry it in my heart.

FIRST SOLDIER (*genially*). You'll have to get used to the idea, chum. If it comes to that none of us has got a country. We're just like a lot of whores.

(*The two* SOLDIERS *lie down and sleep.*)

FRIEDRICH. The outraged earth trembles under me; the trees are withered; the wilderness crawls nearer—where shall I go? I entered a house and it burned to ashes over me. (*Laughing aloud.*) Ha, how the rafters crackled in the blaze!

(*The* LUNATIC *during this last speech has crept up to* FRIEDRICH.)

LUNATIC. Little brother . . .

FRIEDRICH. Who's that?

LUNATIC. Little brother . . .

FRIEDRICH. What do you want?

LUNATIC. Don't be afraid.

FRIEDRICH. Where have you come from?

LUNATIC. The sandstorm drove me here.

FRIEDRICH. You live over there?

LUNATIC. Live? I died over there. . . . Aye, there are many dying over there. . . . They're running, running . . .

FRIEDRICH. From the sandstorm?

LUNATIC. I'm thirsty.

FRIEDRICH. Here, drink this.

LUNATIC. I can drink my own blood, I don't need yours . . . fool . . . idiot . . . blockhead . . . little brother . . .

FRIEDRICH. You're bleeding!
LUNATIC. Don't worry about that. I can drink blood.
SECOND SOLDIER. What's all that row?
FRIEDRICH. I think——

(SECOND SOLDIER *notices the* LUNATIC.)

SECOND SOLDIER. He's ill, that fellow!

(LUNATIC *begins to babble.*)

FIRST SOLDIER. Mad, is he? He'll have strayed from the camp along the line.
LUNATIC (*begins to weep*). Home . . . I want to go home . . .
SECOND SOLDIER. Take him to the Red Cross station.
FRIEDRICH. Oh God!
FIRST SOLDIER. I am the Redeemer, rejoice in Me. I'll take him over to the Red Cross. The Red means that the blood will be washed away.
FRIEDRICH. It must be so. It is for our country's sake!

(CORPORAL *enters.*)

CORPORAL. Another man wanted. Patrol to get information about the enemy reserves. One of you must come back, so we're sending five to make sure. Any volunteers?
FRIEDRICH. I'll go. I'll go, and damn you all!

Darkness.

SCENE IV

No-man's land. Dark clouds sweep across the face of the moon. To right and left are barbed-wire entanglements in which hang skeletons white with quicklime. The earth is torn up with craters and shell-holes.

FIRST SKELETON. I feel so lonely.
The others all lie sleeping round.
Still, I feel the cold no longer,
The deadly cold which racked me through
While I hung dying here
Caught between friend and foe.
The quicklime did its work,
The bloody shreds of skin and flesh
Soon fell away.
Aha! Now I can clap my hands!

(*The* SECOND SKELETON, *caught in the opposite wire entanglement, moves.*)

SECOND SKELETON. There, they've started up again,
The blighters. I have to dodge
Their blasted bullets all the time.

Still, I don't feel hungry any more—
Who's that? A cold and bony hand . . .
Let go, I tell you,
Let me go!
Ah, I forgot . . .
It is my own right hand
Clutching with rigid fingers
At myself . . .

FIRST SKELETON. Don't look so down, old man!
I've learnt to do a nigger dance
And rattle my loose joints.
To-day we're no more friends and enemies,
To-day we're no more black and white,
Now we are all alike.
The worms soon ate our coloured skins,
And now we are all alike.
Gentlemen . . . let's dance.

(*The* SKELETONS *between the wire entanglements shake off the earth from their bones.*)

SKELETONS. Now we are all alike.
Gentlemen . . . let's dance!

FIRST SKELETON. The coloured ribbons on our chests
Have long ago decayed.
Our names were in the newspapers
All bordered round with black.
Aha—let's dance!

SECOND SKELETON. You over there! You without legs!
Pick up your shins and rattle them,
Clap time for us while we dance!

ALL (*laugh*). You over there! You without legs!
Pick up your shins and rattle them,
Clap time for us while we dance!

(*The legless* SKELETONS *pick up their shin-bones and rattle them together. The others dance.*)

FIRST SKELETON. Haha, what have we here?
You over there—why don't you dance?

ALL. Gentlemen . . . let's dance!

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). I'm so ashamed!

SECOND SKELETON. Ashamed?
Really, gentlemen . . . shame! (*He covers his nakedness with his hands.*) I think we all were—once.

(*All cover their nakedness hastily.*)

FIRST SKELETON. The wilderness drove shame away for ever.
Who of us knows shame to-day?

Fools ! Idiots !
Aren't we all naked here ?
Behind our naked bones
Yawns emptiness.

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). Not emptiness . . .

FIRST SKELETON. What ?

SECOND SKELETON. Good God . . .

ALL. Hihi ! Hoho !
Hihi ! Hoho !

FIRST SKELETON. My good sir, are you not well ?
Good sir, we wish to dance !

ALL. To dance ! Dance !

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). I'm not a man.

SECOND SKELETON. What then ?

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). A . . . girl . . .

FIRST SKELETON. Gentlemen ! Cover yourselves !

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). Just thirteen years old . . .
Why do you look at me like that ?

FIRST SKELETON. Young woman, regard me as your protector !

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). Then I need not be afraid ?
I mean, there were so many.

FIRST SKELETON. So many when ?

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). That evening.
Even to-day I don't know why they did it.
Did it really have to be like that, sir ?
One had hardly gone away
Before the next got into bed with me.

SECOND SKELETON. And then ?

SKELETON (*half-hidden*). And then . . . I died of it.

FIRST SKELETON. She died of it !
A charming phrase !
A lovely phrase !
She died of it !
Gentlemen, you are trembling
And your hands . . . hoho . . .
Your hands are still . . .

(*All lower their hands.*)

FIRST SKELETON. There's no shame here, my child !
How should there be ? . . . Would you know
Us from yourself ?
Now we are all alike.
Into the middle with you, then,
If I may make so bold !
You have been outraged ?
Good ; so have we all !

It's nothing but a waste of breath
To talk about it now.
There! You're a clever girl!
Stand here, please, in the middle.

(*They all join hands and form a circle, dancing vigorously round and round the skeleton of the girl.*)

CURTAIN

THIRD STATION

Scene V

Dawn. A Field Hospital, a simple, white-washed room. Over the bed is a crucifix.

Doctor. He's still sleeping.

Sister. He's done nothing but groan and throw himself about for the last three nights. He fancies he's wandering through the desert. Cries for water. Cries he must reach the mountains, the rocky peaks ; but the desert stretches endlessly before him and he can't escape.

Doctor. Quinine, double doses of quinine. A case of nervous shock, those others would think. Think ! Think ! We don't think, we diagnose. It's nothing of the kind. Quite a different matter altogether. . . . Chronic debility of the digestive organs—three spoonfuls of castor oil and two aspirins night and morning . . . uninteresting little case, quite uninteresting. Where is the new one ? Was he given castor oil when they brought him in ? No ? Really, sister, that's most annoying. Inexcusable too. I can't put up with any neglect of duty here. Matter of principle ! Principle !

Sister. Shall I tell him when he wakes up ?

Doctor. Of course, of course. A little upset's all to the good. Stimulates the muscles of the rectum.

(*Both go off.*)

Friedrich (*delirious*). Where are you all ? . . . Oh, the desert sandstorm . . . like a stinging, gritty fog . . . no rest . . . on . . . on . . . I don't know you—who are you ? . . . Ahasuerus . . . cursed one ! . . . Back, back ! No holes for you here . . . I won't go with you . . . no, (*shouting*) no ! (*Waking up.*) Water !

(*Red-cross* Nurse *enters.*)

Nurse. There, drink this.

Friedrich. Are you the Mother of God ?

Nurse. You must lie quite still.

Friedrich. You bear the cross . . . the cross upon your arm . . . My God, is this where they wash away the blood ?

Nurse. We are going to heal you here.

Friedrich. Yes, heal. Your hands are so gentle and cool on my forehead. Look—see how hard mine are.

Nurse. Work has stained and roughened them.

Friedrich. You wear the cross of love, you dispense love . . .

NURSE. To all who lie here, to black as well as white.

FRIEDRICH. Only to us? That's not enough, nurse—why not to all the others too . . . to all . . .

NURSE. They are fighting against us.

FRIEDRICH. Yes, I know . . . It has to be . . . How long have I been here?

NURSE. Three days now. You're quite a hero, you know!

FRIEDRICH. Did they take me prisoner?

NURSE. You were found lashed to a tree; the sole survivor.

FRIEDRICH. Not to a cross . . . the sole survivor . . .

NURSE. Do you feel strong enough to see the Colonel? He has your decoration.

(FRIEDRICH *is silent.*)

COLONEL. Congratulations, young fellow! Your gallantry under the most horrible tortures was simply superb, and your country recognizes your devotion. I have been elected to present you with the cross for valour. You were a stranger among us, but now you are become one of us.

FRIEDRICH. The cross? And now I am one of you?

COLONEL. Now you are one of us . . .

(*Noise outside.*)

COLONEL. What's that?

NURSE (*joyfully*). A great victory, God has granted us a great victory! Ten thousand killed!

COLONEL. You see, my friend . . . Victory is in the air, and you are one of the victors.

(FRIEDRICH *is left alone.*)

FRIEDRICH. The jubilation in their faces! Ten thousand dead! Ten thousand have died that I may find a country. Why don't you laugh? Is that liberation? Is this a time of greatness? Are these the people of greatness? (*Staring rigidly before him.*) Now I am one of you.

Darkness.

SCENE VI

Part of an immense room made oppressive by the lowness of the ceiling. Rows of beds in which lie wounded soldiers, all in grey shirts. HOSPITAL ORDERLIES *appear.*

ORDERLIES. Everything nice and tidy,
Everything in order.
Beds in a nice neat row,
All alike and tidy.

Well, we've done our duty.
The doctor when he comes will find
Nothing at all to grumble at.
We're ready for him now.

(PROFESSOR *enters with his class of* STUDENTS. *He wears a well-cut black morning-coat. Instead of a head he has a skull, and his eye-sockets gleam through gold-rimmed spectacles.*)

PROFESSOR. Yes, gentlemen,
We can face all horrors here.
We might indeed call our work positive,
The negative being the munition works.
In other words we deal in synthesis ;
The armament men are merely analysts.
Haha !
Chemists and engineers can quietly make new weapons
And manufacture unconceived-of gases ;
Their services to war are greatly valued.
But we, my friends, are not content
To do the rescue work that's proper to the doctor.
While we are here, before we go the rounds,
Let me just demonstrate the last of our achievements,
Entirely due, I must admit, to my own labours.
Just show the seven new cases on the screen.

(ORDERLIES *put up a square white screen. One of them beckons and seven naked* CRIPPLES *march forward like clockwork figures. They are all truncated. None of them has arms or legs. Instead they jerk along with black, artificial legs, parading before the screen in single file.*)

ORDERLY. Halt !

(*The men obey. In the silence the clicking of their artificial limbs is audible.*)

Left turn !

(*They obey. Suddenly a dark lantern flashes out, and the expressions of the seven cripples, illuminated by the dazzling white beam, are seen to be all alike and stereotyped.*)

PROFESSOR. Best view from here, gentlemen.
These are the men, for whom our glorious work
Has brought regeneration and rebirth.
Three months ago they were mere passive stumps !
To-day they stand before you—men !
Did you observe the pleasing willingness
With which they carried out my orders ?
To say nothing of the exquisite precision
Of their synthetic movements.

So: here they are, my friends,
Restored in life and limb;
Men, citizens, useful members
Of society, waiting each to fill his place.
But there is more than meets the eye,
You have not guessed my masterpiece—
How should you?—Come closer, gentlemen!
These men, these stumps that were,
Can now enjoy the great prerogative of man.
By delicate and subtle mechanism
I have restored their procreative powers.
No longer impotent, once more they can
Enjoy the pleasures of the marriage bed!

(*One of the* STUDENTS (*with the features of* FRIEDRICH) *falls in a faint.* ORDERLIES *hurry to revive him with water.*)

PROFESSOR (*smiling sympathetically*). Poor young man, to faint in work like this!
How would he fare upon the field of battle?

(*The* STUDENT *covers his face with his hands and goes out, his walk involuntarily reproducing the mechanical walk of the* CRIPPLES.)

(*The electric light is extinguished. The* PROFESSOR, *the* STUDENTS, *the* CRIPPLES *and the* ORDERLIES *all turn pale. A* BLIND SOLDIER *gets out of his bed.*)

BLIND SOLDIER. Tell me, brothers, is it evening?
Is it night?
Night-time is soothing;
Night has cool, soft hands
To stroke my empty eyelids
Quietly.
Day is cruel to me,
The sun is scorching like a bitter fire,
It burns into my skin with pitiless breath.

ARMLESS SOLDIER. Will no one hear me?
I've been calling for so long.
Will no one help me?
Just a little necessary service . . .
Please help me, quickly, someone . . .
It is so horrible to have to lie
In one's own dung.

SPINAL PATIENT. You'd make a fuss if you'd been hit like me.
I'm used to it by now.
I hardly know to-day
Whether I am a man still or a living lavatory.
My bowels are blown to bits;
My heart's the only living thing about me . . .

Will no one here blow out my heart as well
And make a job of it?
I wallow in my filth, and fill myself and you
With loathing.
I curse my heart that keeps on beating.
My soul is long, long dead with loathing.
Only my heart beats on unpitying.
When I came to, the doctor said to me:
The bullet grazed your spine,
But we have saved you.
If that man knew what lay in store for me
He was a devil.
The only kindness he could do for me
Would be to drug me into sleep and death.
And if he did not know what lay in store for me
The madhouse is the only place for him.

FOURTH SOLDIER (*whose body is subject to ceaseless, horrible convulsions*). The madhouse . . . yes
That's just the thing . . .
The very thing . . . But no!
I know a better thing than that . . .
A dugout,
Shut him in a dugout
And blow the lot to bits . . .
Slowly—not too fast . . .
Direct hit!
When the smoke had cleared
I looked around . . . no good;
No way out at all . . . buried
. . . Buried . . . Alive . . .
I went mad . . . I clawed the head-boards
With my nails . . .
I swallowed earth;
My mouth was full of earth.
Digging, digging upwards . . .
Eating my way to air, to light . . .
I ate earth then;
I never knew it tasted good . . .
And then I fell asleep.
I woke up and was here . . .
Was it all that earth
That makes me tremble so?
Did I return to earth too soon?
And am I paying for it now?
Or is Earth having her revenge
For my escape?

FIFTH SOLDIER (*poisoned by gas*). My breath's a ruddy sparrow
That pipes and whistles . . .

My lung's a nest of sparrows . . .
But sparrows fly away,
Fly South in winter-time.

ALL. Each has his song;
We ought to form a male-voice choir.

(*A* PRIEST *enters* (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*), *a crucifix in his uplifted hands, which he holds out to the* WOUNDED SOLDIERS.)

PRIEST. I bring the Saviour,
Oh sad-faced sufferers.
He knows your misery and pain,
All ye who are oppressed, oh come to Him.
He offers healing, love.

ALL. Why does all-powerful God
Permit our suffering?
You say He knows
Our pain and suffering;
Then He is evil
To let it be.

PRIEST. Blasphemy!

ALL. You dare to call it blasphemy?
He it is who utters blasphemy,
And we who are blasphemed.
He, who asks us to believe
That He is with us in our suffering!
You dare call us blasphemers?
Then look, look, look at us!

(*The* WOUNDED SOLDIERS *raise themselves in their beds. The* PRIEST *slowly raises his head, and as he looks at them his eyes widen with horror. Slowly his upraised hands break the crucifix in two. He sinks to his knees.*)

PRIEST. How dared I ever
Think myself a priest,
With fine-spun sophistries
Proclaim myself God's chosen one?
Black horror seizes me
To think of those who solemnly ordained us.
I see the blasphemy
Of empty priesthood,
And I would cry aloud:
Free yourselves, free yourselves from all false priests!
Oh Christ, how are your teachings mocked!
There is no healing,
I see no light
To light this endless night;
Nowhere a guiding hand.
Prepare for your salvation . . .

How could I, myself in need of consolation,
In bitterer need than you,
Dole comfort out to you?
I can no more;
Now I walk with you, at your head . . .

ALL. Good luck,
You enviable one!

(THE NURSES *enter in a long procession.*)

THE NURSES. We bring you medicines,
Poor suffering ones;
Drinks to assuage your thirst,
Cooling cloths
To ease your burning pain,
Soothing tablets
To lull you into sleep.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. What use is sleep to us?
To-morrow only brings another day . . .
Oh, bring us drugs to lull us
Deep, deep, into an endless night,
That we may wake no more!

THE NURSES. You ask too much, poor suffering ones.
Healing we bring,
But death we may not bring.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. Too late, too late.
Your mending and your patching
Does us no good.
Why did you not prevent this horror?
Why start your botching now?
If you had taken thought before
You could be dancing now
With strong and joyful men!

THE NURSES. You wrong us.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. Look closely at us, look,
And say again
We wrong you.
You know not what you are, dear nurses.
Array yourselves in mourning;
Cover your faces, bow your heads;
Forget your Christian charity,
Or call it wretched, barren, botching.

(THE NURSES *raise their heads, shape their lips to a shattering cry, collapse.*)

(*Darkness. Then suddenly the lantern flashes out again. The seven* CRIPPLES *are still standing before the screen, watching them the* PROFESSOR, *the* STUDENTS *and the* ORDERLIES.)

PROFESSOR. It really is a splendid bit of luck
That we have all these cases here to study.

To-morrow we will make a comprehensive
Round of all the wards.
Meanwhile, let me repeat
My words of introduction.
We can face all horrors here.
We might indeed call our work positive,
The negative being the munition works.
In other words we deal in synthesis ;
The armament men are merely analysts.
Haha !

CURTAIN

FOURTH STATION

Scene VII

Early morning. A studio. Friedrich *is working at a more than life-size statue of a naked man, heavily muscular, with clenched, uplifted fists. There is brutality in the pose.*

Friedrich (*working*). The stone resists my efforts ; my hand upon the chisel cannot bring it to life. The chisel chips marble, dead marble ; am I powerless to breathe life into it ? If so I'll do no more. I will not be content to carve a mere memorial to life. . . . Life intense must stream from my creation . . . to wake men from their sleep . . . to fire them to fight for their country until death . . . to hurl defiance. . . . Defiance against whom ? . . . The enemy, of course. . . . But who decides that there shall be an enemy ? Is it some spiritual power within us that forces us to fight ? . . . Or is the enemy selected arbitrarily ? . . . There's a contradiction there. . . . Why can I not succeed ? . . . The problem is so great. Am I too small to symbolize it ? Too puny to pierce that brazen armour ?

(*The* Friend *enters.*)

Friend. I was so anxious I had to come—but I see you are working. My mind is full of foolish thoughts, but I won't disturb you. I will go.

Friedrich. My dear fellow, you don't disturb me in the least.

Friend. I see your great work will soon be finished. You've certainly laboured long and earnestly at it.

Friedrich. A year. But what's a year for the completion of a worthy symbol of our triumphant Fatherland ?

Friend. Do you still doubt ?

Friedrich. That your country is now mine as well ? No . . . Only . . .

Friend. Only ?

Friedrich. I sometimes wonder if there is not something higher still. And yet I don't really want to know. For if I knew there would be no escaping my destiny, I should become Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew.

Friend. And Gabriele ? Would she let you wander ? Would you not find fulfilment at her side ?

Friedrich. The struggle takes no account of women ; perhaps not even of us ourselves.

Friend. Gabriele would be unhappy.

Friedrich. Gabriele is strong.

FRIEND. Yes, she is strong.
FRIEDRICH. We come together proudly, joyfully.
FRIEND. You are so strong!
FRIEDRICH. So strong!
FRIEND. Farewell!

(*The* FRIEND *goes.* FRIEDRICH *works. The doorbell rings and* FRIEDRICH *goes to the door.*)

FRIEDRICH. Beloved!

(GABRIELE *enters. She tries to smile.*)

You look sad, my beloved. If I believed in good fairies I should wish that one would change my clumsy hands to butterflies, to brush away the sadness from your brow like pollen from dark flowers. I should wish to be with you among the sand-dunes where the children play; I should wish to climb high mountains with you, to wander with you on the farthest slopes. To wander with you in the darkness through dreaming towns, to overcome you in the poppy-fields and kiss you there with gladness in our hearts. . . . You are silent, dearest. You do not smile. . . .

GABRIELE. The tears are welling in my heart . . . but they are frozen, and cannot reach my eyes.

(FRIEDRICH *sits quietly beside her, and takes her hand.*)

I am going to leave you.

FRIEDRICH (*as though he had known what she would say*). You are going to leave me. (*Then, as though suddenly awakened.*) . . . You . . . are going to . . . leave me . . . ?

GABRIELE. I must.

FRIEDRICH. For my sake?

GABRIELE. For your sake.

FRIEDRICH. Do you love me?

GABRIELE. I love you as a woman loves a man whom she would have sweep her like a tempest, whom she would have as the father of her child.

FRIEDRICH. And yet . . . ?

GABRIELE. When my father said he would disown me for ever if I married you it was as though I were caught in a sudden blizzard; the icy snow-flakes burnt me. I came to you smiling. But my father would cast me out from my country for ever—never to see it again, never again to tread its soil. It is my childhood's memory, it is the blood that feeds my heart. I have fought against its influence for many days and many nights. And to-day at last I saw clearly: I can never give it up.

FRIEDRICH. And I thought you were strong!

GABRIELE. Perhaps it is because I am strong.

FRIEDRICH. But I shall stay . . . I too have roots, I too have a country of my own, to which I am bound with my heart's blood, to

which I have sacrificed my heart's blood ; your country, my country. The whole great Fatherland. You are weak, Gabriele, weak.

GABRIELE. Perhaps . . . Farewell !

(*She goes.*)

FRIEDRICH. Farewell, you who are strong. And now the dusk has fallen round me, dusk eternal. Day has slipped into the far golden sea. Night dreams in cloven gorges where the black moths flutter, a night that will never lift again. Oh Gabriele ! If you'd betrayed me —robbed me of my faith ! . . .

(*Sunbeams fall on the statue.*)

So you would remind me ? The triumph of the Fatherland. I believe in that, I will believe in that ; I will believe in it and symbolize it for ever. If it costs me my life I will do it.

(*He sets to work again. A hurdy-gurdy starts up in the courtyard below. He goes to the window, returns and renews his labours. The bell rings.* FRIEDRICH *opens the door. A* WOMAN *enters, a war-cripple, miserable and emaciated.*)

WOMAN. Alms for the poor, alms for the poor.

(FRIEDRICH, *about to offer her money, stops and considers.*)

FRIEDRICH. Are you a war-cripple ?

WOMAN (*weeping*). Must I tell you ? (*She shows him her ulcerated hands.*)

FRIEDRICH. Poor soul.

WOMAN. They surrounded me, they sidled up to me like jackals. . . . What should they know ? Driven out to fight like cattle. What do cattle know of morals ? What can they know ? And one among them was diseased and corrupted, and infected me. How can I tell you whether he was bad or not ? They called him a hero. They were all heroes. Wretched cattle in a slaughter-house.

FRIEDRICH. It had to be, poor woman, for our country's sake.

WOMAN. For our country's sake ? Our country ? For the sake of a small handful of rich men who feast and debauch and gamble with the products of our labour. Ah, how I hate them ! Brutes, devils ! I know them well ; I was one of them myself. God reward you for your labours, they say ! But what sort of a God is it that lets us rot away in misery ? That mocks us with his " blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." The God of love and pity and charity bazaars ! When I slink by their lighted halls and see them revelling within, I think I see their God crowned among them, scattering confetti. We are brutes . . . just brutes . . . for ever brutes.

(*The* WOMAN *collapses on a chair, sobbing.*)

FRIEDRICH (*after a pause*). Was your husband at the front ?

WOMAN. Yes, out there in the colonies. My bonny husband.

FRIEDRICH. Won't you bring him in?

WOMAN. Shall I? I tell you, you'll have a shock. It will put you off your work. He's not a pleasant sight, my husband. The disease eats deeper year by year. Still, if you really want to see him, sir. . . . He was the one that brought me to disease.

(*The* WOMAN *goes out, and returns leading her* HUSBAND *with his hurdy-gurdy. His face is a mass of sores.*)

Say good day to the gentleman.

HUSBAND (*stammering*). God . . . be . . . with you.

(FRIEDRICH *looks at him steadily, then begins to tremble.*)

FRIEDRICH. Is it really you, my friend? My poor, poor friend!

HUSBAND (*fearfully*). God . . . be . . . with you.

FRIEDRICH. You need not be afraid, poor fellow. It is I, Friedrich, Friedrich—we served in the same company, we marched across the endless, glowering desert together, we suffered thirst and hunger together. Don't you remember the fellow who volunteered to go on that tricky reconnaissance? We two, we together. We drew lots for the job, and I drew the longest straw. Now do you remember, my poor friend?

(HUSBAND *begins to cry miserably.*)

WOMAN. It's no good sir. It's no good talking to him. He remembers nothing now, nor ever will. He cries because he thinks he ought to cry. He can just think that much, but no more. The doctor said he'd soon have to help him out of life. Well, sir, now you've had your entertainment—can we go, sir?

(*The* WOMAN *leads out her* HUSBAND, *who is still miserably weeping.*)

FRIEDRICH. Madness, madness. Where? Where to go? Ahasuerus, where are you? I follow you, Ahasuerus; joyfully I follow you. Anything, anything to escape! A million shattered arms are stretched towards me. The agonizing cries of a million mothers echo in my ears. Where? Where? The unborn children whimper. The madmen cry. Oh, holy weeping! Speech defiled! Mankind defiled! . . . For our country's sake! Oh, God . . . can it really be? Can a country really ask this much of us? Or has our country sold its soul, sold it to the State? Sold it in a dirty business speculation? Perhaps the State is a pimp, and our country a whore to be sold for any brutal lust—blessed by that procuress, the Church! Can a Fatherland that asks so much really be divine? Can it be worth the sacrifice of a single soul? No, no, no! A thousand times no! Rather wander without rest, without hope, wander with you, Ahasuerus.

(*He throws himself upon the statue.*)

I shatter you to fragments, victory of the Fatherland!

(*He seizes a hammer and shatters the statue, then sinks down, an inanimate heap. After a time he rises again.*)

Now I must wander through the wilderness, without rest, without hope . . . I cannot, I am filled with loathing. Gabriele leaves her lover for a little plot of land . . . And I betray my Fatherland, the Fatherland in which I believed, to which I pledged myself, to which I dedicated my life-work—I betray my Fatherland for the sake of two poor, miserable beggars . . . No, not betray. I cannot go that way, I will not. It leads through nights of rain and storm, through plague-stricken streets ; it loses itself in the wilderness. Farewell, Gabriele !

(*He goes to the bureau and takes up a revolver. Through the open door his* SISTER *enters and regards him and the broken statue.*)

You come too late.

SISTER. I come in time.

FRIEDRICH. My path is blocked.

SISTER. Your path leads upwards.

FRIEDRICH. Back to my mother ?

SISTER. To her, yes ; but higher still.

FRIEDRICH. Back to my Fatherland ?

SISTER. To your land, yes ; but higher still.

FRIEDRICH. I can see no higher ; I am dazzled.

SISTER. I will shield your eyes ; then you will see. Your path leads to God.

FRIEDRICH. Haha ! To God ! God crowned among the revellers, scattering confetti !

SISTER. To God, who is spirit, love and strength;
To God who dwells in the heart of humanity.
Your path will lead you to humanity . . .

FRIEDRICH. To humanity . . .
I am not worthy.

SISTER. Soon like a mask you will cast aside
So much that now seems worthy in your eyes.
Who knows what in the end will prove
Your real worthiness ?
He who desires to join humanity
Must find it first within himself.
The path I bid you follow
Sinks to the depths and climbs the heights,
Leads you darkly through the underworld,
The underworld called criminal by fools.
But you are both accused and judge.

(FRIEDRICH *buries his face in his hands, then rises, staggers, stretches out his arms.*)

FRIEDRICH. Sunlight streams through me,
Freedom and sunlight.

My eyes have seen the path
And I will follow it.
Alone, and yet with you;
Alone and yet with all the world,
In the knowledge of humanity.

CURTAIN

FIFTH STATION

Scene VIII

Bedroom of a city tenement. In the two beds, the Woman, *the* Children, *the* Lodger (*with* Friedrich's *features*).

The Lodger (*to the* Daughter). I can't bear it.
We sleep with moans on every side, and cries.
I can't bear it any more.
Come, and I'll hold you to me
And turn you inside out
Like a soft woolly cap.
Daughter. Stay here . . . I won't leave you.
She's groaned like this at night
Ever since we had the news
That he'd been crushed to death at work.
Then, of course, the eleventh child
Which she was carrying at the time
She brought out dead.
A bit of luck that was.
I should have had to wash the kid myself.
No one will have her as a waitress now
Because she'll sing and dance
Like someone mad
In the middle of her work,
And offer prayers and hymns . . .
She's always at the bottle now.
Who is there now to keep the kids?
. . . There's only me.
And that means overtime at the works.
Stay here, and I'll do everything you ask.
Lodger. All right; I'll stay.
I think she keeps me here
Moaning and crying in the night—
Doesn't she mind you being a whore?
Daughter. She used to nod her head
When the other lodger beat me . . .
Does that make you cross with me?
Lodger. Cross with you, fool?
What else could you have done?
If he forced you?
It's only her that gets on my nerves.

Suddenly when you're in my arms
She shrieks or groans.

DAUGHTER. I almost envy the children.
They sleep all day from hunger
And all night from dirt and weariness.
They'd really have been better off
Brought up in the orphanage.

LODGER. That's not right . . .

DAUGHTER. No, no—I only thought of it.

LODGER. She nods when a blackguard beats her daughter
And shrieks and groans
When her daughter hugs me to her.
What was that you said . . . the orphanage . . .
The orphanage . . . The orphanage . . .

(*Darkness descends on the room.*)

LODGER (*dreaming*). The orphanage . . . the orphanage . . .

(*Silence.*)

(*Dreaming.*) Now she will shriek no more,
Groan no more . . .
Now are you content?
Now you are in the orphanage . . .
The orphanage . . .

(*The* NIGHT VISITOR *enters, his death's head thickly veiled.*)

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Lodger, get up.
It's time for work.

LODGER. All right, I'm coming.

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Make haste . . .

LODGER. Where are you taking me?

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Don't ask me where, just come.
You are in good hands.

Phosphorescence flickers round the NIGHT VISITOR *and the* LODGER, *who stands there in his workman's blouse. The* NIGHT VISITOR *takes his arm.*

Can you see the house?

LODGER. There, over there, I see it glimmering.
It's funny—are you taking me
The proper way?

THE NIGHT VISITOR. I am taking you the right way—
The narrow way!
The only way!

LODGER. That's not the factory.

THE NIGHT VISITOR. Use your eyes, look, look!
What is it then?

LODGER. It looks like a prison . . .
Look at the shining roof—
It's thick with gold!
THE NIGHT VISITOR. Right! Right!
What do you see now?
LODGER. High walls with iron spikes.
And in the walls
Holes barred with steel.
THE NIGHT VISITOR. Right, right!
LODGER. No, that's not the factory
That's a prison!
Let go—Let me go to work!
THE NIGHT VISITOR (*grips him firmly*). I'll take you to your work,
The only work you and your like are fit for.
Take off your spectacles of everyday
And learn to see things as they really are!
You thought this was a prison?
Well, look, look!
We are here.
Look at the name above the gates!
You're trembling—let me read it for you:
You see I've not betrayed you:
The great factory!

Darkness.

(*Then for a few moments the roar of machinery, the pounding of pistons, the whirring of wheels and the hissing of molten metal and steam.*)

SCENE IX

Death and Resurrection. The ground floor of a prison (*the great factory*). *In the corridors are triple-bolted cell-doors. The spiral stairways leading to the upper floors have rectangular openings to allow the whole prison to be overlooked. On the cement floor, at the bottom of the staircase, a* PRISONER *lies* (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*), *his head flung back, his arms flung out as though he were crucified.* JUDGES *in black coats hurry by: their heads are skulls.*

JUDGES (*fiercely*). Get at the facts of the case! The facts of the case!

(PRISONER *cries out shrilly.*)

WARDER. It wasn't my fault;
I was just taking him downstairs,
Like you said,
To see his wife,—you gave permission.

(WARDER *and* CHIEF WARDER *hurry over to the* PRISONER, *bend over him and raise his head.*)

CHIEF WARDER. He is still breathing.
WARDER. I knew he was a godless man,
I always knew it.
He wished another dead;
He murdered him in all his dreams.
And now he's killed himself;
Broken the Church's holiest command
Twice over.
CHIEF WARDER. He meant to kill himself, so who are we to stop him?
JUDGES (*scornfully*). Get at the facts of the case! The facts of the case!

(PRISONER *cries out accusingly.*)

WARDER. So help me God . . .
It wasn't like a human voice at all!
CHIEF WARDER. It was the devil himself!

(PRISONER *shrieks in accusation, and the doors of the cells burst open. In the open doorways stand the* PRISONERS, *their arms limp and swinging loosely. They raise their eyes in rapture.*)

PRISONER (*first softly, then with increasing resonance*). Horror lies within these prison walls—
Unplumbed, unfathomed; a bottomless morass,
An endless swamp,
A silent swamp.
In the long, empty twilight hours
White maggots crawled out from the iron bars.
I did my best to ward them off, I struggled . . .
It was no use.
Grey maggots gnawed into my flesh.
PRISONERS. Hear us! In suffering we are united.
Behind these prison walls damp horror lies concealed,
Unplumbed, unfathomed; bottomless morass.
PRISONER. Once I saw red flowers;
I stretched my hand to grasp them,
Found it was my heart.
And as I held it dumbly in my hand
It was devoured by maggots, grey and blind.
I ate with them.
PRISONERS. Hear us! In suffering we are united.
Once we saw red flowers.
How sweet they seemed, red flowers;
They were our hearts.

And as we held them dumbly
They were devoured by maggots, grey and blind.
We ate with them.

PRISONER. I looked down through the shaft;
I saw land there, I saw firm land.

CHIEF WARDER. And there your wife was waiting.

PRISONER. And there my wife was waiting . . .

WARDER. You broke the Church's holiest command—
Repent before you die!

PRISONER. What do you know about it, brother?
It is so far beyond all good and evil,
Repentance, heavenly recompense.
I heard a voice; it said:—
All, all deluded;
He was not nailed upon the Cross by men,
He crucified Himself.

PRISONERS. We too know that . . .
We knew it long ago.
He crucified Himself.

CHIEF WARDER. Think for a moment of your wife.
It's I who have to break the news to her,
A nice job too!
After all, I suppose my job
Is looking after people.

PRISONER. I'm thinking of my wife.
I'm thinking of my child as well,
Which she is bearing towards the light
In a body racked with pain.
My child . . .
Sum total of my guilt,
My guilt which never dies.
Ourselves we go
Slowly and painfully upon our way
And send out little children
To crucifixion.

(*A pregnant* WOMAN *rushes in through a door in the background, cries out, and throws herself down by the* PRISONER.)

WOMAN. Oh, why have you done this?
I was waiting for you . . .

PRISONER. The pain goes deep.
Someone is always waiting for us—
But we burn the last bridges,
And night comes down and blots out every path
Which leads to you.
Further we roam . . .
Knowing you are waiting . . .
And further still, and further . . .

Mocking we wander further . . .
Even though we ourselves are waiting.
WOMAN. The child . . .
Does your child mean so little?
PRISONER. It means so much . . .
Yet it was guilt towards my child
That cast me into the abyss, blasted,
Blasted since the day
When man first rose against his kind
And, hating, murdered man.
To children we
Are gods and saviours . . .
Helplessly we watch
The long road to the Cross.
WARDER. Blasphemer!
Holy Mother of God forgive him!
PRISONER. Impotent, impotent too, like all the rest,
With her lying offers of pardon.
She mourns for her son unceasingly;
In this alone
Is she innocent and pure.
WOMAN. What is there now for me in life . . .
I can only kill myself,
Myself and my child . . .
What else is there left for me?
What else?
PRISONER. What else?
Come close and I'll tell you.
Perhaps through crucifixion only
Liberation comes;
Perhaps the powers of light
Spring only from His blood.
Perhaps through crucifixion only
Can redemption come,
The way to light and freedom.
PRISONERS. Brother, you light the way.
Through crucifixion only
Shall we liberate ourselves.
Through crucifixion only
Shall we find redemption,
And the way to light and freedom.
PRISONER. Woman . . . Mother . . .

(*He dies.*)

CHIEF WARDER. Come. He is redeemed.
WARDER. Burdened as he was with sin . . .
PRISONERS. From sin he has released himself,
Too weak to find redemption . . .

WOMAN (*crying out*). Husband . . . ! (*She wrings her hands in lamentation.*)
CHIEF WARDER. Come.
WOMAN. I cannot come . . .
My child . . .
My child . . .

(*There is a silence interrupted by soft music. Then the* PRISONERS *leave their cells, forming a semicircle round the* WOMAN. *The sun shines on them all.*)

PRISONER (*a woman*). A child.
How many, many years have passed
Since last we heard the laughter of a child . . .
How many, many years have passed
Since last we played with children. . . .

(*The* PRISONERS *stand looking at the* WOMAN *full of awe. She holds the child out to them, her face distorted with pain, yet transfigured. The prison roof gives place to the limitless sky.*)

Darkness.

SCENE X

The stage is hidden by thick mist. A country-road is visible. The WANDERER (*with* FRIEDRICH'S *features*) *appears.*

THE WANDERER. I feel to-day as though
This were a new awakening.
As though the grave had split asunder
And shown the sky again.
The earth-chained vessel breaks.
Judge is now prisoner,
And prisoner judge ;
And both stretch out their hands,
Casting aside their triumphs and their shames
Like crowns of thorns.
The morning breaks.
The mist dissolves.
I know my work.
I know it now.

SCENE XI

A large meeting-room decorated with coloured paper flowers, and with sentimental paintings of war on the walls.

CHAIRMAN. I call upon our gallant old friend.

(*An* OLD MAN, *an Anti-Pacifist, mounts the dais.*)

OLD MAN. Ah yes, those were indeed the days! The days when our victorious comrades swept conquering forward while the enemy ran before us like a lot of sheep; the days when a great cry ran through the land—"My Country!"

(FRIEDRICH *enters.*)

Those were indeed the days! The great days! Magnificent days! Now you're whimpering for bread. What's the significance of a loaf of bread? If you want work, get it! And what does it matter whether you feed on potatoes or roast meat?

(*The crowd murmurs.*)

Have you so soon forgotten the great deeds that were done in the name of our Fatherland, the blood that our heroes shed?

A CRY. Are we any the less heroes because we happen to be still alive?

(*The* OLD MAN *leaves the dais.*)

CHAIRMAN. I call upon the Professor.

PROFESSOR (*on the dais*). As the chosen representative of that Science which is proud to be the servant of our State to-day, of that Science which is ultimate truth and final knowledge—as the chosen representative of Science, I should like to pick a bone with the honourable gentleman who preceded me. The cause of your distress is not bread, nor the lack of it; neither bread nor science nor culture. Go, gentlemen, and study the laws of causality, try to grasp the law of association in regard to all phenomena. . . . The Science in whose ranks I have the honour to serve is inspired by a holy devotion. It is here to help our glorious State, to account for it as a complete ethical organism.

(*Threatening murmurs from the crowd. The* PROFESSOR *leaves the platform.*)

CHAIRMAN. I call upon his Reverence.

PRIEST. Brothers in Christ, heed my words. As our Saviour once said to His disciples, "I am not come to bring you peace, but a sword," so I am come to bring you not soothing rhetoric but iron truth. In time of war did I not preach and say unto you: "Annihilate the enemy, choke him with poison gas and shatter him with bombs, destroy him ruthlessly with submarine and blockade. All that you do finds favour in the eyes of God!" For the Lord of Hosts was with you, and an angel strode before you and withered the ranks of the enemy. . . . Think of those bygone days of glory and forget your petty cares. Think on Him Who died for you upon the Cross.

CROWD. Away with the clergy!

Down with the rich!

We are hungry, hungry, hungry!

CHAIRMAN (*striking a bell*). I call upon the Agitator.

AGITATOR. You are right, brothers! What do the old fire-eaters

mean to us ? Or the professors ? Or the priests ? Christ has become the rich man's God. We don't need Him any more, you and I. What we need is bread. What we need is money. We've got to fight against stupidity, we've got to set up reason in its place—and by we I mean you, the people. But first let's have a look at what these fellows have just been saying : " State " is a new name for Fatherland ; that's what they said, and it's a lie. That's a conception that has nothing but a few thousand square miles of earth as its foundation. A few languages, one of which is permitted while the others are suppressed. And any amount of notices saying " Forbidden." They'd like to say, " Permitted the rich, forbidden the poor." That's what they'd say if they had the courage. And then there's taxes : let the rich down lightly and pile it on for the poor. That's their motto. When the rich find they haven't castles enough and want new villas on the Riviera they say damn it all, we'd better have a war. Sit down at that 'phone at once and set a few dozen lies going so that someone will have to declare war on somebody. Start up a society to care for the wounded—a few more or less don't matter—and get a few war memorials designed while you're about it. . . . Now for the Church and the Priests—shall we have a word about them too ?

CROWD. Down with the clergy !

AGITATOR. I thought as much. Well, and what then ? What but exalt the healthy reason, as typified in you, the people ? That means bread and decency and work and our rights. And what must we do ? Simply overthrow stupidity. That's what we've got to do. Break up the mansions of the rich ! Oh, I can see you at it ! All your pent-up energy released, fighting gloriously at last ! Holding aloft the flag of freedom ! Woman embracing you with feverish arms ! Masses surging ! Shots ringing out ! I'll write you pamphlets to guide you and verses to inspire you, verses which shall themselves be bloody deeds ! My words shall go with you like the martial blare of trumpets ! Blood flows ! The blood of freedom ! March ! March !

CROWD. Yes, this time we'll march !
We're hungry, hungry !
This time we'll really fight !
Bread ! Bread ! Bread !

CHAIRMAN (*violently ringing his bell*). Here is someone called Friedrich who wishes to address you.

(FRIEDRICH *presses through the crowd and mounts the dais.*)

FRIEDRICH. Gently, brothers, gently ! I know you need bread. I know poverty is eating at your bodies. I know your misery, your wretched, stinking hovels. I know oppression and the look in the eyes of the outcast. I know, too, of your hated. But in spite of all that I beg you to restrain yourselves, for I love you.

CROWD. Let's listen to him.
He's right.
He loves us.

FRIEDRICH. I understand your deep disgust of men who bring dishonour to the name of God. I understand it indeed. But let me warn you against the words of him who called on you to march on the rich, against the glittering half-truths of his words! His reasoning did not go very deep. Can't you see the man for what he is? This opportunist agitator? Yesterday his talk was all of individualism, to-day he cries: "God is the people!" And to-morrow he will cry: "God is the Machine!" Therefore the people are machines. None the less he will delight in the swinging pistons and the whirling wheels, the smashing hammers. For him the people are the masses: he knows nothing of the people as men and women. Have no faith in him, for he has no faith in humanity. And before you set out upon your great march you must have faith in humanity. It is better for you to suffer want than to follow the precepts of this man without faith.

PEOPLE. He asks us to suffer want!
Down with him!
Down with him!
We must march! March!
We are hungry!
Hear him out first!
Just hear him out!

FRIEDRICH. I am not speaking now of material want, my friends. It is not right that you should suffer hunger. I wish you bodily comfort and spiritual want. I wish you this in the name of the love that unites us all. You must no longer starve. You must be rich, you must find your life's fulfilment. I will fight side by side with you against poverty and misery . . . but wait one day longer, wait until midday. Come to the market-place and let me speak with you there.

(*Excited uproar.*)

A WORKMAN. Well, we've gone hungry so long now that one more day can't make much difference.

PEOPLE. Yes, we will wait!
No, no more waiting! March!
We are hungry!
Hungry!
Let us wait!
Wait!
Let us wait!

(*The crowd goes out. A few young people remain behind. A* STUDENT *approaches* FRIEDRICH.)

STUDENT. What is the good of learning when the spirit is denied? What is the good of reason when we must suffer in its name? You must be our leader.

FRIEDRICH. We must advance together, side by side.

(*A* GIRL STUDENT *approaches* FRIEDRICH.)

THE GIRL. In the name of love, be our leader. Once more humanity must be vitalized by love. We will bear no more children until love encircles us with radiant hands. Lead us!

FRIEDRICH. Now down the arches of the years I see
The great cathedral of mankind arise;
Through doors flung wide
The youth of every nation marches singing
Towards a crystal shrine.
Dreams dazzle me—
No misery, no war, no hatred left on earth,
And mothers garlanding bright girls and boys
For games of joy and dances of increase.
Stride on, oh youth, stride on, oh fruitful youth,
Fruitful eternally amidst a barren world;
Within your breast
You bear the life divine.

(*The young people, hand in hand, leave the room in twos and threes. The room is now half in darkness. As* FRIEDRICH *turns to go the* GIRL *suddenly appears out of the darkness.*)

THE GIRL. My lips are parted with desire. My heart is consumed with glowing passion. . . . I will serve you, I alone. . . . Leave the others. . . . They only understand force—and even if your force is for the good. . . . I must serve you.

FRIEDRICH. Serve the spirit, serve your God.

THE GIRL. I shudder before him; He is coldness and death.

FRIEDRICH. Say rather passionate warmth!

THE GIRL. I shrink before him. But you . . . you I love. . . . To you I offer myself; embrace me. Take me . . . my burning breast. . . . My womb cries out for you . . . I ache for your embrace. . . . Give me a child. . . .

FRIEDRICH. I do not want your breast nor your embrace. Has the whole world rights over my body?

(*With bowed head the* GIRL *goes slowly out.*)

Wretched woman! Unredeemed.

(*A* MAN *with turned-up coat collar rushes into the room.*)

THE MAN. I hate you.

FRIEDRICH. I call you brother.

THE MAN. I hate you. I know you; don't think I've not recognized you. I've seen you in my room on lonely nights. Why don't you turn monk? Leave us in peace! What do you want with the mob? You desecrate God!

FRIEDRICH. I celebrate Him.

THE MAN (*hurrying away*). I hate you!

FRIEDRICH. Brother, you betray yourself.

CURTAIN

SIXTH STATION

Scene XII

A precipitous rock-face leading to a narrow ledge. Two men are climbing the rock.

Second Climber (*with the* Friend's *features*). Stop, stop!
I shall fall,
I am giddy.
First Climber (*with* Friedrich's *features*). Come, pull yourself together;
It is not far now.
Second Climber. The ledge is narrow;
We shall slip and fall
Down, down into the abyss.
First Climber. Perhaps, but courage! Courage!
The ledge to which we climb
Rewards all danger with stupendous height,
With air brighter than light, clearer than fire.
Second Climber. In the name of friendship, stop!
An icy coldness sweeps down from above.
First Climber. It is the glacier,
Dazzling and remote.
Second Climber. The silence there
Oppresses heart and mind.
First Climber. You're hearing ghosts.
Fasten the rope about you.
Second Climber. I would have thanked you once
For freeing me from lowly tyrannies.
But now you lead me on
From terror to worse terror.
First Climber. Not everyone released
Is really free.
Second Climber. Up there no one will hear you.
First Climber. The mighty walls of rock rejoice to hear
The sound of shouting voices,
And echo them in joyful repetition.
Second Climber. I'll go no further . . .
First Climber. Then I must go alone.
Second Climber. You'll leave me here,
Your old companion?
First Climber. It is not I who leave you.

SECOND CLIMBER. In the name of friendship, stay!
FIRST CLIMBER. . In the name of friendship (*he climbs rapidly higher*)
I must go!
SECOND CLIMBER. Can you still hear me call?
Think of the days when we were young together!
FIRST CLIMBER. Your voice is like the scree
That breaks away and plunges
Loosely down the mountain-side.
Youth advances with me.
How easily youth climbs!
SECOND CLIMBER. You go too far—
Take care, take care;
I am afraid for you.
FIRST CLIMBER. Myself I cannot leave
So I leave you. (*Almost at the summit*). . . .
Farewell!

Darkness.

SCENE XIII

Square in front of the Church. FRIEDRICH *enters and leans against the archway of the door.*

FRIEDRICH. The sunlight warms the roofs and strokes the blinded windows of the narrow attics. My breast expands.

(*His* MOTHER *comes across the square dressed in mourning.*)

Mother!

MOTHER (*scarcely glancing up*). All these years you've never come, till I began to believe I carried you once more beneath my heart.

FRIEDRICH. I bring you all my love; let me hold you gently in my arms and kiss your tired and wrinkled face.

MOTHER. You are dead for me! You left your family and estranged your people.

FRIEDRICH. I am nearer to them now than ever I was before.

MOTHER. You belong to the others.

FRIEDRICH. To the others, yes, but to you as well.

MOTHER. Nobody can belong to us and to the others. We are a proud people.

FRIEDRICH. Mother! Don't you feel the earth as a single mighty womb quivering in travail? Think of the torture you suffered in bearing me—thus is the world convulsed to-day . . . a lacerated bleeding womb, bearing all humanity anew.

MOTHER. I am too old, my life is nearly done. I don't understand you.

FRIEDRICH (*covers his face with his hands*). Mother!

(*His* MOTHER *goes. His* UNCLE *enters.*)

Dear Uncle!

UNCLE. What does this mean? What do you want?—I warn you not to count on me. I refuse to acknowledge you.

FRIEDRICH. I don't want money, Uncle; but I do want you to acknowledge me.

UNCLE. Wait a minute, wait a minute! Do you mean to tell me that you've earned enough to keep yourself? No, your coat is shabby; you can't hide that from me.

FRIEDRICH. You delude yourself, Uncle.

UNCLE. Delude myself? Well, if I do it's only because you force me to. You brought my business to the verge of ruin. "His nephew's an enemy of our people"—that's what they all said. You brought misfortune to your whole family.

FRIEDRICH. If I did it was only because there was no escaping it.

UNCLE. Your presence is distasteful. You are really impossible.

FRIEDRICH. Uncle, I struggle with you because I must. But it is not against you that I am fighting; it is against the dark walls and barriers built up round the real you.

UNCLE. I knew it, you traitor! You even dare attack your own flesh and blood!

FRIEDRICH. I did that long ago, Uncle.

(*The* UNCLE *walks on. The* DOCTOR *enters.*)

Good morning, doctor—remember me still?

DOCTOR. Ah . . . you . . . Oh yes, very ordinary little case—debility of the rectum. How is it now? All right now? Digestion good?

FRIEDRICH. Tell me, doctor; do you believe in humanity?

DOCTOR. What a damn-fool question! Believe in humanity! I believe that most people have a good digestion, and those who have not should be given a dose of castor oil—one tablespoonful for adults, one teaspoonful for children. Stupid question. Really quite simple-minded. A man who can ask that wants looking into. . . . Stand still. . . . Say Ah. . . . Close your eyes. . . . Highly developed psychosis. . . .

FRIEDRICH. Your medicines will never make people healthy.

DOCTOR. You must come and see me at once. To-day. I have just bought a nice sanitorium. A water-cure might do the trick even now. But come at once, and don't count on anything. Typical everyday case. Report this afternoon. Room seventeen.

(*He hurries off. A* SICK MAN *with restless eyes shuffles in.*)

SICK MAN. Well, I must say you really seem to believe in it.

FRIEDRICH. In what?

SICK MAN. In yourself, and in humanity generally.

FRIEDRICH. I believe in humanity, certainly.

SICK MAN. He he! . . . And in love as well

FRIEDRICH. I cannot live without love.

SICK MAN. And all that for the sake of . . .

FRIEDRICH. . . . liberating humanity.

SICK MAN. I see—you are not interested in building public lavatories, then? A pity—a great pity. Let me tell you something, my dear sir. For a long time I myself tried to redeem the world with love . . . But it's no good. The only thing to do is to build new lavatories. The one's we are used to are always too dark, and hidden away. . . . I know what you're thinking—what on earth is behind all this? I'll tell you—simply to teach humanity that the only infallible panacea for all its ills is universal suicide. It's no good trying to cure them with love—I've tried it and I know. . . . So now I'm building lavatories.

FRIEDRICH. Have you put your plans before the doctors?

SICK MAN. Oh yes, I've been to see them about it several times already. But they didn't want my plans—said they'd thought of it themselves already.

FRIEDRICH. And you would really like all men to kill themselves?

SICK MAN. Yes!

FRIEDRICH. Why don't you go about preaching war, then?

SICK MAN. Oh no, they mustn't do it that way. They must kill themselves voluntarily. . . . Well, what about it? I advise you to think it over very carefully. The building of lavatories with an eye to self-annihilation.

FRIEDRICH. Poor fellow!

SICK MAN. You pity me! *You* . . . pity . . . me . . .

FRIEDRICH. You are sick, corrupted with disease.

SICK MAN (*as though suddenly awakened*). I can't believe in love! I can't, I tell you . . . only whores . . . only whores. . . . No one has ever loved me.

(*Shaking his head he hurries off.*)

FRIEDRICH. I must seek him out—to-day. . . . I'll ask my mother to look after him . . . no . . . that girl who came to me.

(*A* WOMAN *who has entered during the foregoing scene moves nearer with studied provocation.*)

WOMAN. What do you think you're doing? . . . Can't you see that love and goodness are eternally separated by a hopeless gulf? That love crouches ready to spring like a rabid dog licking lascivious lips? That love and goodness glare into each other's eyes like deadly enemies? . . . Ha ha! . . . You're on the wrong track this time, my young friend! Don't answer me. Your answer is nonsense. Your goodness is nonsense. . . . Love lashes the body. . . . Let me tear at your breast with my teeth until the blood flows, red blood over white teeth; let me kiss your thighs. . . . Your goodness! . . . You are a fool, a miserable, wretched fool. You and your goodness—you suffocate me!

FRIEDRICH. And you? Who are you?
WOMAN. Woman!

(*She goes.* FRIEDRICH *leans silently against the doorway of the Church. His* SISTER *enters.*)

SISTER. There was a light in your eyes, Friedrich.
FRIEDRICH. Dear friend.
SISTER. What will you do, Friedrich? How shall you symbolize humanity's victory this time?
FRIEDRICH. No special symbol is needed for that, no proof. Humanity can see victory in its heart, can see it in all my work.
SISTER. And you will stay here?
FRIEDRICH. I shall stay here, and yet still be going further on my way. Through pestilential streets and fields of poppies, over sunlit, snowy mountain peaks and through the barren wilderness—knowing all the time that I am not uprooted, knowing that I am rooted in myself.
SISTER. One must die and be born again to find one's roots.
FRIEDRICH. But that knowledge is only a beginning.
SISTER. And whither does it point?
FRIEDRICH. Towards humanity.
SISTER. And beyond humanity?
FRIEDRICH. Beyond . . . ? I can't think of that yet. I feel as though I'm dwelling in limitless space. It is glorious to know that one may be anchored and yet still wander.
SISTER. Good-bye, Friedrich. I shall watch your journeyings.

(*She goes. People stream out of the Church and others join them in the square from all the side streets.*)

CROWD. That's him, the one that's going to speak—
He said we must wait until midday.
Now he will have to speak,
Since we have waited.

FRIEDRICH. Brothers, sisters; there is not a single one of you of whom I have ever heard, yet I know you all.

You, my child, go every day to school; you go in fear. In the schoolroom the day is overcast and dark, yet outside the sun is shining. The teacher sits at his desk like one of those evil spirits in the fairy-tales you read in secret. He glares at you and scolds you because you haven't done your homework. And yet your heart is full of strange experiences. You would gladly talk to him about them, but he talks you down and accuses you of not having learnt the Scriptures and of not being a good Christian.

And you, slim and delicate in your maidenhood; you too I know . . . Only a few weeks ago you left school with joy in your heart; it seemed that youth and freedom beckoned you with heavenly bells . . . And now you stand at the factory bench. Day in, day out, you push a single lever backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards. Always the same lever. And your breath becomes heavy in the stifling

atmosphere, and your eyes fill with tears when you think of the sunlight grimed by the dusty windows, of freedom and youth and flowers.

And I know you too, woman, careworn and worked to the bone; I know how you live in your wretched garret with your hungry, shivering children; how at evening you open the door to your husband with a spirit dulled and a body tired to death.

And you, husband, I know you too; how you are filled with horror at the very prospect of returning home to that room with its evil smell, its squalid misery, its festering disease. I know how you hate those who gorge themselves at your expense and then sneer at you if you go to the inn to drink yourself insensible; insensible, that you may think no more and see no more.

And you, young girl,—I know of your nights of hot desire.

And you, young man,—I know of your restless seeking after God.

And you, rich man, for ever heaping gold on gold, despising everyone —yourself and others too.

And you, woman, a tree heavy-laden with rare fruit which no one comes to pluck, so that you break and wither in your superfluity.

And you, soldier, pinched in your coloured coat which drains all joy from life. I know your astonished eyes when you see before you the figure of striding youth.

How could the artist symbolize this youth?
Because he exists, he really is.
And so it is with all of you,
Distorted images of true humanity!
Gasping for breath, joyless, embittered—
All because you have buried alive the spirit . . .
Mighty engines thunder day and night,
A million spades are ceaselessly at work
Piling still more rubble on the spirit's grave.

Your hearts are dry and withered. The hearts of your fellow-men you regard as convenient bell-pulls which you can tug at when you feel inclined. You throw glittering gold-pieces at their feet and say they are spring-awakened birds flying rejoicing through the air You pave your streets with gold-pieces and tell yourselves that you are treading rich green fields enamelled with wild flowers.

Your lips shape barren laws, iron prison houses gnawed with rust.

Your hands raise walls around you, and you say, beyond them is the jungle.

You sow hatred in the hearts of your children, for you know no more of love.

You have carved the figure of Christ in wood and nailed it to a wooden cross, because you yourselves refuse to go the way of crucifixion which alone can bring redemption.

You build castles and prisons and set men to rule over them, men who serve neither God nor humanity but a phantom, an evil phantom.

For the mothers and their children you raise cruel and subtle pillories —for you well understand the art of torture.

You mothers who bear children, and from indifference or false pride sacrifice them to frivolous lies and illusions—you are no longer mothers.

You are all of you, all of you, no longer men and women ; you are distorted images of your real selves.

And yet you could still be men and women, still be human, if only you had faith in yourselves and in humanity, if only you would grant the spirit its fulfilment.

You could stride erect where to-day you creep along crooked and bent.

Your eyes could be filled with the light of joy, while to-day you are half blind.

You could go forward with winged feet, while to-day wherever you go you trail after you iron chains.

Oh, if only you were men and women—men and women unqualified —free men and women !

(*During this long speech there has been ever-increasing disturbance among the crowd. Some have kneeled down. Others, weeping, bury their heads in their hands. Some lie broken on the ground. These now rise again in gladness ; others open wide their arms to heaven. A* YOUTH *rushes forward.*)

YOUTH. To think that we ever forgot ! We are men, men and women !

SEVERAL WOMEN AND GIRLS (*half-aloud*). We are men and women !

ALL. We are men and women ! (*Softly, as though smiling to themselves.*) We are men and women !

(*There is a silence.*)

FRIEDRICH. Now, brothers, now I bid you march ! March now in the light of day ! Go to your rulers and proclaim to them with the organ tones of a million voices that their power is but illusion. Go to the soldiers and tell them to beat their swords into ploughshares. Go to the rich and show them your heart, your heart that was once buried alive beneath their rubbish. Yet be kind to them, for they too are poor, poor and straying. But the castles—these you must destroy ; destroy them laughing, the false castles of illusion. Now march ! March forward in the light of day.

Brothers, stretch out your tortured hands,
With cries of radiant, ringing joy !
Stride freely through our liberated land
With cries of Revolution, Revolution !

(*All the people are now standing with outstretched hands. Then they join hands and march away.*)

ALL. Brothers, stretch out your tortured hands
With cries of radiant, ringing joy!
Stride freely through our liberated land
With cries of Revolution, Revolution!

CURTAIN

MASSES AND MAN

A Fragment of the Social Revolution of the Twentieth Century, translated by Vera Mendel

WORLD-REVOLUTION :
MOTHER OF NEW
POWER AND RHYTHM,
MOTHER OF NEW
PEOPLES AND PATTERNS,
RED FLAMES THE CENTURY IN BLOOD OF EXPIATION :
THE EARTH NAILS ITSELF
TO THE CROSS

TO THE WORKERS

THE AUTHOR TO THE PRODUCER, OCTOBER, 1921

CERTAIN critics have deplored the fact that your production of this play weakens its contrasting elements of reality and dream by wrapping the picture of "reality" in the same visionary atmosphere as that which rightly surrounds the "dream pictures." I want to tell you myself that you have carried out my meaning. These pictures of "reality" are not realism, are not local colour; the protagonists (except for Sonia) are not individual characters. Such a play can only have a spiritual, never a concrete, reality.

In my political capacity, I proceed upon the assumption that units, groups, representatives of various social forces, various economic functions, have a real existence; that certain relations between human beings are objective realities. As an artist, I recognize that the validity of these "facts" is highly questionable. ("It further remains to be determined whether we exist as individuals.")

I see convicts in the prison yard, sawing wood with a monotonous rhythm. In sympathy, I think: these are men. This one may be a workman, the next a farmer, the next a clerk . . . I see the room in which the workman lived, his little peculiarities, the characteristic gestures with which he threw away a match, or kissed a woman, or came out of the factory gates in the evening. I see the broad-backed farmer and the narrow-chested little clerk just as clearly. Then—suddenly—they are no longer human beings, X and Y and Z, but dreadful puppets dimly aware of the compelling fate that governs them.

Two women once walked past the window of my cell, while I was clinging to the iron bars. Apparently two old maids. Both had short white hair and dresses identical in shape, colour and cut; both carried grey umbrellas with white dots and both waggled their heads.

Not for one moment did I see these as "realistic human beings" going for a walk in the narrow prison lane of a "realistic" Neuburg. It was a dance of death by two old maids, one old maid and her mirrored death, that stared me in the face.

"Masses and Man," considered as a whole, is the presentation of such visionary insight. It literally broke out of me and was put on paper in two days and a half. The two nights, which, owing to my imprisonment, I was forced to spend in "bed" in a dark cell, were abysses of torment. My mind was tortured with visions of faces, daimonic faces, faces tumbling over each other in grotesque somersaults. In the mornings, shivering with fever, I sat down to write and did not stop until my fingers, clammy and trembling, refused to serve me.

No one was allowed into my cell even to clean it ; I turned with uncontrollable rage against any comrade who asked questions or wanted to help me.

The laborious and blissful work of pruning and remoulding lasted a year.

To-day I can look at the play critically. I recognize that its literary form was conditioned by the inward constraint of those days. Such raw confession violated my personal privacy and made it difficult to shape my own experience to æsthetic ends at a time when the clear objectivity of art was as yet impossible. The immensity of the days of revolution had not yet formed an ordered mental picture ; it still lived on in me as a kind of torturing spiritual chaos.

I am surprised at the critics' lack of understanding. Possibly the play is insufficiently worked out. But, in any case, those ideas which, to us, who live close to the workers and understand and express their spiritual values, are a moving, rending, all-absorbing human experience, are nothing more than catchwords and newspaper phrases to " bourgeois " critics. Bourgeois society, and the art which reflects it, sees only idle wrangling about abstractions in a theme which, to the working classes, represents most tragic and shattering conflicts. The proletarian, on the other hand, is quite unmoved by the " profound " and " significant " expression of the spiritual experiences of the middle classes.

I need not dwell on the fact that proletarian art must ultimately rest on universal human interests, must, at its deepest, like life or death, embrace all human themes. It can only exist where the creative artist reveals that which is eternally human in the spiritual characteristics of the working people.

ERNST TOLLER.

FESTUNG NIEDERSCHŒNENFELD.
October, 1921.

This play was first put on paper in October, 1919, the first year of the German revolution, in the prison-fortress of Niederschœnenfeld.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Working Men and Women
The Woman (Sonia)
Her Husband (a State Official)
The Nameless One
An Officer
A Priest
Two Girl Prisoners

In Sonia's dream pictures :

Sonia
The Guide

The State Official
Bankers
The People's Sentries
The Nameless One
Prisoners
Shadows

The second, fourth and sixth scenes are dream pictures ; the first, third, fifth and seventh are visionary abstracts of reality.

Translator's Note

The stage directions in square brackets, which I have supplied in a few places where the text does not immediately explain itself, are based on the original Berlin production.

MASSES AND MAN

FIRST PICTURE

SCENE.—*The back room of a workmen's tavern is indicated. In the middle a clumsy table. A* WOMAN *and some* WORKMEN *sit around it.*

FIRST WORKMAN. Pamphlets have been distributed:
We assemble in the large hall.
Early to-morrow the factories will close,
The masses are in ferment,
To-morrow will decide.
(*To the* WOMAN) Comrade, are you ready?

THE WOMAN. I am ready.
With every breath power grows in me.
How I have longed and waited for this hour,
When heart's blood turns to words
And words to action!
Often I have been stricken—
Clenched my hands with rage and shame and pain!
When the vile papers bawl of victory
A million hands take hold of me,
A million voices shriek:
You, you, are guilty of our death!
Yes, every horse whose flanks tremble and foam
Dumbly accuses me—accuses.
If I to-morrow sound the trumpet of the Judgment
And if my conscience surges through the hall—
It is not I who shall proclaim the strike;
Mankind is calling, strike! and Nature, strike!
I think the dog who leaps to greet me at my door
Barks, strike!
I think the flowing river hisses, strike!
My knowledge is so strong. The masses—
In resurrection, freed
From wordy snares woven by well-fed gentlemen—
Shall grow to be
The armies of humanity;
And with a mighty gesture
Raise up the invisible citadel of peace . . .
Who bears the flag, the red flag,
Flag of beginnings?

SECOND WORKMAN. You. They follow you.

(*Silence flickers.*)

THE WOMAN. If only all our agents keep the secret!
You think that the police know nothing?
But what if troops surround the hall?
FIRST WORKMAN. Whatever the police may know,
They do not know our final purpose.
Once that the masses fill the hall
They'll be a mighty flood which no police
Can shape to little splashing fountains.
Moreover the police are growing cautious;
No longer drunk with power, they waver.
The troops are with us—
There are Soldiers' Councils everywhere.
To-morrow is decisive, comrade.

(*There is a knock at the door.*)

Betrayed!
SECOND WORKMAN. But they must not take *you*!
FIRST WORKMAN. Only one door!
SECOND WORKMAN. Go by the window.
FIRST WORKMAN. The window gives upon a light shaft.
THE WOMAN. So near the battle—

(*Louder knocking. The door opens. The* WOMAN'S HUSBAND *enters. His coat collar is turned up over his face. He looks round quickly and raises his bowler.*)

This is—a friend.
Nothing to be afraid of . . .
You come to me—
You find me.
THE HUSBAND. Good evening.
(*Softly*) Please do not introduce me,
But may I speak to you?
THE WOMAN. Comrades . . .
THE WORKMEN. Good night—
Until to-morrow!
THE WOMAN. Good night. Until to-morrow!

[*The* WORKMEN *go out.*]

THE HUSBAND. You realize
I do not come here as a helper.
THE WOMAN. Forgive my budding, momentary dream.
THE HUSBAND. Only your conduct, which dishonours me,
Forced me to come.
THE WOMAN. The honour of a citizen imperilled by my actions?
Strange!

Then has the vote been taken?
Does the majority
Threaten to oust you from its ranks?

THE HUSBAND. I beg you, do not jest.
For I obey considerations which you flout;
The code of gentlefolk
Is binding on me.

THE WOMAN. Stamping you and your like
To formulæ!

THE HUSBAND. Commanding our submission, our self-discipline . . .
You do not grasp my words.

THE WOMAN. I see your eyes.

THE HUSBAND. Do not confuse me.

THE WOMAN. You—you . . .

THE HUSBAND. To be brief,
I am about to limit your activities.

THE WOMAN. You . . .

THE HUSBAND. The urge you feel to help society
Can find an outlet in our circles.
For instance,
You could found homes for illegitimate children.
This is a reasonable field of action,
A witness to the gentle nurture which you scorn.
Even your so-called comrade-workmen
Despise unmarried mothers.

THE WOMAN. Go on, go on.

THE HUSBAND. You are not free to act.

THE WOMAN. I *am* free.

THE HUSBAND. I may expect some slight consideration,
Some tactfulness, if not some understanding.

THE WOMAN. I care for nothing
But the work we have to do.
I serve this work; and, understand me,
I *must* serve it.

THE HUSBAND. Let me dissect your motives:
The wish for wide activities
Governs your conduct.
I do not say the motives that determine
This wish are anything but noble.

THE WOMAN. How every word you utter hurts me . . .
You know the pictures of Madonnas
In peasant homes?
With hearts, sword-pierced, bleeding dark tears;
Those ugly, pious, tender pictures,
So simple-minded and so great . . .
You—you . . .
Can you talk of my ambitions?

What an abyss opens between us!
No idle wish has so transformed my fate;
It was the bare necessity,
The need stored in my deepest being,
The need to be a human creature.
Necessity—oh! understand—*necessity* transforms me—
Not mood, not occupation for an idle hour,
Need to be human, sways me.

THE HUSBAND. Need? And have you a right
To speak of need?

THE WOMAN. Oh let me be . . . my man,
I hold you, kiss your eyes.
You . . . speak no more.

THE HUSBAND. I would not willingly torment you—
This place—— Can we be overheard?

THE WOMAN. Although a comrade hear us—
They need no code of honour
To be considerate.
If only you could understand them, feel their need—
Which is *our* need—must be!
You have abased them;
And their humiliation
Dishonours you.
So you have written your own doom . . .
Hold back the pity in your eyes!
I am not sentimental or neurotic.
No, I belong to them because fine feelings
And wretched little hours appointed to good works
Can only soothe our vanity and weakness!
I tell you, there are comrades
Who blush for you—
Unless they laugh aloud,
As I laugh now!

THE HUSBAND. Then you must know the truth:
The secret service knows—
The authorities are watching you.
Wife, I have sworn allegiance to the State—
You cripple my career.

THE WOMAN. And so——?

THE HUSBAND. I tell you frankly
That I shall suffer for your actions;
Which, I assure you, touch my feelings also—
The more that you will harm the State
As well as my career—
For you support the enemy in our midst.
That gives me grounds for a divorce.

THE WOMAN. In that case—if I harm you—
If I am a hindrance on your path—

THE HUSBAND. There is still time.
THE WOMAN. In that case——
I am ready.
I bear the blame of my own actions.
You need not fear that the divorce will harm you.
You . . .
You . . . my arms reach for you
In my great need.
My blood is blossoming for you—
Without you I shall be a faded leaf.
You are the dew that causes my unfolding,
You are the mighty March wind throwing torches
Into my thirsty veins . . .
There have been nights and cries of budding boys
Rearing and prancing in the flush of youth.
Oh! carry me away into the fields, the parks, the alleys.
So humbly I will kiss your eyes . . .
I think I shall be weak without you,
Boundlessly weak . . .
Forgive me, *this* is weakness.
I see your case and you are justified.
For, look, to-morrow I shall stand before the masses,
To-morrow I shall speak.
I shall attack the State
To which you have sworn loyalty;
To-morrow
I shall tear down the mask
That hides grimacing murder.
THE HUSBAND. But this is treason
To the State!
THE WOMAN. Your State makes war,
Your State betrays the people,
Your State robs, squeezes and oppresses
The disinherited,
The people.
THE HUSBAND. The State is sacred, war saves it alive;
Peace is a phantom of neurotics
And war only a broken truce of arms.
War is the rule, the constant life of States,
Threatened, without, within, by enemies.
THE WOMAN. How can a body live
Eaten by pestilence and fire?
You have not seen the naked body politic—
The worms devouring it,
The private purses battening on human lives.
You have not seen . . . I know, you have sworn loyalty;
You do your duty and your conscience is at rest.
THE HUSBAND. Is this your last decision?

THE WOMAN. My last decision.
THE HUSBAND. Then—good night.
THE WOMAN. Good night.

(*As the* HUSBAND *is about to go.*)

May I go with you?
To-day for the last time . . .
Or am I shameless?
Or am I shameless—
Shameless to my last drop of blood?

(*The* WOMAN *follows her* HUSBAND. *The stage darkens.*)

SECOND PICTURE

(*A Dream Picture.*)

The Interior of the Stock Exchange is indicated. At the desk the OFFICIAL RECORDER. *Round him* BANKERS *and* BROKERS. *The* RECORDER *has the face of the* HUSBAND.

THE RECORDER. I record.
FIRST BANKER. Munition factories—
350.
SECOND BANKER. Make it
400.
THIRD BANKER. I sell
At 400.

(*The* FOURTH BANKER *drags the* THIRD *forward. In the background there is a murmur of bidders and sellers.*)

FOURTH BANKER (*to* THIRD BANKER). Heard the news?
Retreat imperative.
The great offensive
Is going to fail.
THIRD BANKER. And the reserves?
FOURTH BANKER. The stuff
Is poor in quality.
THIRD BANKER. The food inadequate?
FOURTH BANKER. That also.
Although
Professor Uhde thinks
That 95 per cent of rye
Is a luxurious diet.
THIRD BANKER. And leadership?
FOURTH BANKER. Is excellent.
THIRD BANKER. Not enough alcohol?
FOURTH BANKER. The distilleries
Work at high pressure.
THIRD BANKER. Then what is lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. The General at head-quarters
Has sent for ninety-three professors,
Including the official Gluber
Who's in our pocket—
Results are rumoured.
THIRD BANKER. Which are?

FOURTH BANKER. To be kept dark
In bourgeois circles.
THIRD BANKER. Does a perverted love
Weaken the troops?
FOURTH BANKER. Strangely, no.
For man hates man.
There is a lack.
THIRD BANKER. What's lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. The mechanism of life
Has been revealed.
THIRD BANKER. What's lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. The masses
Require incentive.
THIRD BANKER. What's lacking?
FOURTH BANKER. Just love.
THIRD BANKER. That's quite enough!
And so the war
Our instrument,
Our mighty instrument,
Which pulls the strings—
That Kings and States,
Ministers, Parliaments,
The Press, the Church,
Must dance—
The round world over,
The oceans over,
Dance—
Our war is lost,
You say, is lost!
Is that the balance?
FOURTH BANKER. No, you miscalculate.
The flaw is found,
Accounts will balance?
THIRD BANKER. How so?
FOURTH BANKER. Quite internationally.
THIRD BANKER. Is that known?
FOURTH BANKER. The contrary.
We dress it up—
It's purely patriotic
And independent
Of our depreciated currency.
THIRD BANKER. Well underwritten?
FOURTH BANKER. The biggest banks
Support the enterprise.
THIRD BANKER. And profits?
Dividends?
FOURTH BANKER. Come rolling in
Most steadily.

THIRD BANKER. It sounds a good thing;
What's the product?
FOURTH BANKER. We call it
Convalescent Home
For strengthening the will to victory:
In fact it is
State-managed brothel.
THIRD BANKER. Splendid! I'll take up
One hundred thousand.
One more question:
Who organizes?
FOURTH BANKER. Experienced generals,
Connoisseurs
Of tested regulations.
THIRD BANKER. Is the system
Planned?
FOURTH BANKER. By regulation,
As I said.
Three prices
And three categories.
Brothel for officers,
Stay overnight.
Brothel for non-coms,
Stay one hour.
And the third brothel,
Men in the ranks,
Stay fifteen minutes.
THIRD BANKER. I thank you.
When does market open?
FOURTH BANKER. At any moment.

(*There is a noise in the background. The* THIRD *and* FOURTH BANKERS *retire to the background.*)

THE RECORDER. Newly admitted:
National Convalescent Home,
Limited Company.
FIRST BANKER. I have no commission to buy.
SECOND BANKER. The dividends do not tempt me.
THIRD BANKER. I will take up
One hundred thousand
At par.
THE RECORDER. I record.
FOURTH BANKER. I, the same number.
FIRST BANKER (*to* SECOND BANKER). He's a cool bidder.
What do you think?
SECOND BANKER. A telegram!
The battle

On the western front
Is lost.
FIRST BANKER. Gentlemen!
The battle
On the western front
Is lost!

(*Calls, shouting, screeching.*)

VOICES. Lost!
VOICE. Munition factories
Are offered
At one fifty.
VOICE. Liquid-fire-thrower Trust.
On offer.
VOICE. War-prayerbook Limited.
On offer.
VOICE. Poison-gas-works.
On offer.
VOICE. War loan
Is on offer.
THIRD BANKER. I take up another
One hundred thousand.
VOICE. Oho!
In such a slump?
VOICE. Who was it said the battle
Is lost?
VOICE. Is the news true?
Or meant to rig the market?
He coolly takes up
Twice one hundred thousand!
SECOND BANKER. It's a bear drive.
I'll buy at
One fifty.
VOICE. I'll make it
Two hundred.
VOICE. I'll buy at
Three hundred.
VOICE. Who'll sell at
Four hundred?
I'm bidding.
THE RECORDER. I record.
FOURTH BANKER (*to* THIRD BANKER). The sly fox guesses!
THIRD BANKER. Forgive the question,
Our most powerful instrument
Is saved?
FOURTH BANKER. How can you doubt it?
The mechanism of life
Is simple.

There was a leakage;
Now discovered.
And stopped.
These passing fluctuations of our stock
Are negligible—
Essential:
The stability
Of the mechanic law.
In consequence
Our system saved!

THE RECORDER. I record.

(*The* GUIDE *enters. His face magically resembles that of the* WOMAN; *on it, lines of death and lines of intensest life are interwoven. He leads the* WOMAN.)

THE GUIDE. Gentlemen,
You record
Too hastily.
Your system governing the blood in human veins!
Your system working upon human creatures!
There's a flaw in your system:
Human nature.
One spurning foot
And the whole mechanism
Is a broken plaything.
So beware!
(*To the* WOMAN.)
Speak, you.

THE WOMAN (*softly*). Gentlemen,
These are men and women.
I say again
Are *men* and *women*.

(*The* GUIDE *and the* WOMAN *fade, as paling shadows. Sudden silence.*)

THIRD BANKER. Did you hear?
A mine disaster,
It seems.
People in want.

FOURTH BANKER. Then I suggest
A charitable entertainment,
A dance around the desk
Of the Exchange.
A dance
To cope with want;
The proceeds to the poor,
Gentlemen, if you please,
A dance!

I will contribute
A share
In the War Convalescent's Home,
Limited.

VOICE. But women?

FIRST BANKER. As many as you wish.
Just tell the porter
To order five hundred
Accomplished girls.
Meanwhile—

THE BANKERS. We will contribute,
We will dance,
The proceeds go
To the poor!

(*Music of clinking gold coins. The* BANKERS *in top-hats dance a fox-trot round the desk. The stage darkens.*)

THIRD PICTURE

The stage remains darkened. Chorus of the Masses (*as from far off*).

THE MASSES. We, from eternity imprisoned
In the abyss of towering towns;
We, laid up on the altar of mechanic
And mocking systems; we,
Whose face is blotted in the night of tears,
Who from eternity are motherless—
From the abysses of the factories we cry:
When shall we live in love?
When shall we work at will?
When is deliverance?

(*The stage grows lighter. A large hall is indicated. On the platform, a long narrow table. The* WOMAN *sits on the left. Working men and women closely packed in the hall.*)

GROUP OF YOUNG WORKING WOMEN. So battle breeds fresh battle!
No longer let us dally with our masters,
No longer turn aside nor weaken in our purpose,
But let a body of comrades
Sow the machines with dynamite;
And factories shall scatter in the air
To-morrow.
For the machines
Herd us like beasts for slaughter—
Machines
Hold us cramped in a vice—
Machines
Day by day beat
Out of our bodies
Rivets and screws—
Point three inch screws—point five inch screws—
Till our eyes wither and our hands decay
Upon our living bodies.
Down with the factories! Down
With the machines!

SINGLE VOICES (*shouting in the hall*). Down with the factories! Down
With the machines!

THE WOMAN. I too was blind and desperate,
Battered, devoured, tormented by machines;

I shouted: Tear them down! . . .
It was a dream.
And evil is the dream that blurs your eyes,
You children, scared with darkness!
For see, this is the twentieth century;
The case is judged, is settled.
Machines can never be undone.
Scatter the earth with dynamite
And let a single night of action
Blow factories to nothing—
Before spring comes
They will have risen again
More cruel than before.
Factories may no longer be the masters
And men the means.
Let factories be servants
Of decent living;
And let the soul of man
Conquer the factories.

GROUP OF YOUNG WORKING MEN. Then let us perish with the factories.
We waste ourselves with words of hate and fury.
The masters build their palaces, while our brothers
Rot in the trenches.
Meadows and dancing, colours, play,
Blossom about us—in our nights
We read of it and howl to heaven.
A craving lives in us for knowledge . . .
But when *they* took the best of life
It turned to evil . . .
Sometimes we touch it in the theatres—
So tender and so fine, it mocks
Us with its beauty.
They have destroyed our youth in schools,
Our souls are broken and our lives
Shout want—raw want.
We are the steaming stench of want.
What else are we to-day?
We will not wait!

GROUP OF FARM LABOURERS. We have been hounded off our mother earth.
Rich masters buy the land
As they buy venal women;
Make sport of her—
Our blessed mother earth;
Thrust our rough arms
Into munition factories,
Where we, uprooted, wither.

Joyless towns break our strength.
We want the land!
The land for all!

THE MASSES IN THE HALL. The land for all!

THE WOMAN. When I passed through the poor quarters,
Where grey rain drips
Through shingled roofs
And fungus grows on bedroom walls,
A sick man stuttered:
The street is better—almost better—
We live in sties, don't we? in sties!
His eyes were shy
And I was shamed with him . . .
But would you know the way, brothers,
The only remedy for us
Weak ones.
Who hate the cannons?
Strike! Not a hand's turn more!
To strike is action.
Then, strong as rocks,
We weak ones need no violence
To burst our chains;
There is no weapon made
Can conquer us!
Call up our voiceless armies! Call
A strike!
Hear me:
I call a strike!
These six years past
Moloch devours our bodies,
And in our streets
Women with child break down—
Whom hunger makes too weak to carry
The burden of the unborn.
Out of your homes this bitter want,
Pestilence, madness and raw hunger glares:
But over there, see, over there,
The money-bags spue forth their orgies
And hard-won victories are drowned
In foaming wine.
The thrills of luxury dance fatefully
Round golden altars.—But out there,
See the pale faces of your brothers
And feel their bodies clammy in the chill
Of evening!
Do you smell corruption?
Do you hear screams?
Tell me, do you hear them cry:

"Your turn has come!
We powerless, we
Chained to the guns,
We shout to you:
You! Bring us help!
You! build a bridge for us!" . . .
Hear me: I call a strike!
Who henceforth feeds munition works,
Betrays his brother—
More than betrays—
Slays his own brother!
And you, women!
Remember the old legend
Of women stricken with eternal barrenness
For forging arms!
Think of your men who suffer!
I call a strike!

THE MASSES IN THE HALL. We call a strike!
We call:
Strike!

(*The* NAMELESS ONE *comes out of the Masses, hurries to the platform and stands to the right of the table.*)

THE NAMELESS. He who would build a bridge
Must look to his foundations.
A strike to-day
Is but a bridge without the piles.
We need more than a strike.
To strike, at best
Will force a peace this once;
A truce, no more.
War must be ended
For all eternity!
But first, a last, most ruthless fight!
What use to end the war?
The peace you will create
Still leaves your fate unaltered.
On this side lies a show of peace
And the old doom for you,
On that, a battle and a new
Order on earth.
You fools, break the foundations!
Break,
I say, break the foundations!
Then let the mouldering house bolstered with gold
Be swept away by the avenging flood.
The system that we build will be more habitable;

The factories belong to workers
And not to my lord Capital.
The time is past when our bowed backs
Perched him up greedily to scan for distant treasure,
Plot wars to enslave foreign folk
And instigate the screech of lying papers:
"Your country! For your country!"—
Drowning their truer tune:
"For me! for me!"—
That time is past!
The masses of all countries cry together:
The factories belong to workers; and the power
To workers.
All is for all!
I call more than a strike,
I call: a war!
I call: the Revolution!
Our enemy up there
Cares not for pretty speeches.
Your power to match his power!
Force . . . force!

A Voice. Arms!

The Nameless. Yes, arms are all you need,
Storm the town hall and fetch them;
And let your war-cry be:
Victory!

The Woman. Hear me!
I will not—

The Nameless. Be silent, comrade!
Handclasping, prayers and passionate pleas
Beget no children;
Consumptives are not cured with slops and soups;
To fell a tree one needs
The axe.

The Woman. Hear me!
I will not have fresh murder.

The Nameless. Be silent, comrade—
What do *you* know?
I grant you feel our need.
But have you stood ten hours together in a mine,
Your homeless children herded in a hovel?
Ten hours in mines, evenings in hovels,
This, day by day, the fate of masses.
You are not Masses!
I am the Masses!
Masses are fate.

The Masses in the Hall. Are fate. . . .

The Woman. Only consider—

Masses are helpless,
Masses are weak.
THE NAMELESS. How blind you are!
Masses are master!
Masses are might!
THE MASSES IN THE HALL. Are might!
THE WOMAN. My feelings urge me darkly—
But yet my conscience cries out: No!
THE NAMELESS. Be silent, comrade,
For the Cause!
The individual, his feelings and his conscience,
What do they count?
The Masses count!
Consider this
One single bloody battle; then,
For ever peace.
No mockery of peace, as formerly,
Concealing war—
War of the strong upon the weak,
The war for loot, the war for greed!
Consider this:
An end to misery!
Consider:
A crime fades to a fairy story
In this the dawn of freedom for all peoples.
Think you I counsel lightly?
War is necessity for us.
Your words will split us—
For the Cause
Be silent.
THE WOMAN. You . . . are . . . the Masses.
You . . . are . . . right.
THE NAMELESS. Lay the foundations of the bridge!
Whoever stands across our path,
Be trodden down!
Masses are deeds!
THE MASSES IN THE HALL (*rushing out*). Deeds!

(*The stage darkens.*)

FOURTH PICTURE

(*A Dream Picture.*)

A courtyard surrounded by high walls is indicated. Night. In the middle of the court, standing on the ground, a lantern dribbles scanty light. From the corners of the courtyard the PEOPLE'S SENTRIES *appear.*

FIRST SENTRY (*sings*). My mother bore me—
In a ditch one night.
Lalala *la*
Hm, hm.
SECOND SENTRY. Father spawned and ignored me
In his cups one night.
ALL THE SENTRIES. Lalala *la*
Hm, hm.
THIRD SENTRY. Three years they shore me—
'Tis a gaolbird's plight.
ALL THE SENTRIES. Lalala *la*
Hm, hm.

(*From anywhere, the* NAMELESS *approaches with ghostly, noiseless steps. Stands beside the lantern.*)

FIRST SENTRY. My father maintained me—
But forgot to pay.
ALL THE SENTRIES. Lalala *la*
Hm, hm.
SECOND SENTRY. My mother—in pain she
Walks the streets, as they say.
ALL THE SENTRIES. Lalala *la*
Hm, hm.
THIRD SENTRY. The bourgeois complained of me
On election day.
ALL THE SENTRIES. Lalala *la*
Hm, hm.
THE NAMELESS. Open the ball,
I give you a tune.
SENTRIES. Halt! Who goes there?
THE NAMELESS. Did I ask you
For your names,
Who are nameless?
SENTRIES. Give us the password.
THE NAMELESS. Masses are nameless.

SENTRIES. Are nameless,
As we all.
THE NAMELESS. I open your ball—
I, herald of action.

(*The* NAMELESS *begins to play a concertina. Provocative rhythms, now sensually soothing, now stormily passionate. A* MAN CONDEMNED TO DEATH, *wearing a rope round his neck, steps out of the darkness.*)

THE CONDEMNED. In the name of all those
Condemned to die:
We beg a last mercy:
Invite us to dance.
Dance is the kernel
Of all things:
Life,
Born of a dance,
Urges to dance—
Dance of desire,
Dance of the years
And dance of death.
SENTRIES. The last request
Of the condemned
Must always be fulfilled!
So we invite you.
THE NAMELESS. Come! Here we are all alike
Shadows.
THE CONDEMNED. All those condemned to death!
Put down your coffins
And stand up
For the last dance.

(*Others condemned to death, wearing ropes round their necks, come out of the darkness* [*with harlots*]. *They dance with the* SENTRIES *around the* NAMELESS.)

SENTRIES (*singing*). In a ditch she bore me . . .
He spawned and ignored me. . . .

(*They go on dancing. After a short time:*)

In gaol they shore me. . . .

(*They go on dancing. The* NAMELESS *suddenly breaks off. The harlots and the condemned run into a corner of the yard. Night swallows them. The* SENTRIES *resume their posts. Silence gathers about the* NAMELESS. *The* GUIDE, *in the shape of a* SENTRY, *has come through the wall. He holds the* WOMAN *close to him.*)

THE GUIDE. The road is hard to go,
But the road's end
Rewards you.

Look there,
The play is just beginning.
If the sensation tempts you,
Take a part.

(*A* SENTRY *brings in the* PRISONER (*face of the* HUSBAND) *and leads him to the* NAMELESS.)

THE NAMELESS. Condemned
By the tribunal.
SENTRY. He condemned
Himself.
He fired on us.
PRISONER. Death!
THE NAMELESS. Are you afraid?
Listen—
Sentry, speak out:
Who taught us
The death sentence?
Who armed us?
Who cried "hero," and "noble deeds"?
Who hallowed violence?
SENTRY. Schools.
Barracks.
War:
Everlasting.
THE NAMELESS. Force! . . . Force!
Why did you shoot?
PRISONER. I swore allegiance
To the State.
THE NAMELESS. Then you die
For *your* Cause.
SENTRIES. Stand up—
Back to the wall.
THE NAMELESS. Rifles loaded?
SENTRIES. Loaded.
PRISONER (*at the wall*). O life!
Life!

(*The* WOMAN *tears herself away from the* GUIDS.)

WOMAN. Hold fire!
That is my husband.
Forgive him
As I forgive him humbly.
Forgiveness is so strong,
Beyond all struggle!
THE NAMELESS. Do *they* forgive
Us?

WOMAN. *Do they wage war*
For men and women?
Do they fight
For all mankind?
THE NAMELESS. Only the Masses count.
SENTRIES. Back to the wall!
SENTRY. Pardon is weakness. . . .
I fled from our enemies
Yesterday.
They had lined me up, back to the wall,
Scarred with their lashes.
Beside me the man
Appointed to kill me.
With my own hands they compelled me
To dig my own grave.
The photographers waited to brand their plates
Greedy for murder. . . .
I spit upon the Revolution
If we are to be fooled
And mocked by murderers.
I spit upon the
Revolution.
SENTRIES. Back to the wall!

(*The face of the* PRISONER *turns into the face of a* SENTRY. *The* WOMAN *speaks to a* SENTRY.)

THE WOMAN. Yesterday
You stood up
Back to the wall.
To-day you are standing
Back to the wall.
You are he who to-day
Stands, back to the wall.
Man, you are he!
Know yourself, man.
You are he!
SENTRY. Only the Masses count.
THE WOMAN. Only Man counts.
ALL THE SENTRIES. Only the Masses count.
WOMAN. I offer up
Myself
To mankind.

(*Ugly laughter from the* SENTRIES.)

WOMAN (*stands beside her* HUSBAND). Then shoot me!
I renounce.

(*The stage darkens.*)

FIFTH PICTURE

The hall is indicated. Dawn creeps through the windows. A dreary light falls on the platform. The WOMAN *sits to the left of the long table. The* NAMELESS *to the right. At the doors of the hall are the* PEOPLE'S SENTRIES. *In the hall isolated working men and women crouch at the tables.*

THE WOMAN. Has any news
Come this last hour ?
I slept. Forgive me, comrade.
THE NAMELESS. Message comes after message.
Battle is battle, bloody play
Of forces and cool judgment.
Before midnight we occupied the station ;
At one, lost it again.
And now our forces
Again advance to the assault.
We hold the post office
And at this moment
The wires are giving out
News to all peoples of our deeds
Done for the Cause.
WOMAN. Our work, our Cause !
O holy words !
NAMELESS. Holy words, comrade !
They call for steely armour,
They call for more than burning, tender-hearted speech,
They call for ruthless war.

(*For whole seconds silence flickers in the hall.*)

WOMAN. Comrade, even now
I cannot bear it.
Battle with violence enslaves.
THE NAMELESS. Battle with spiritual force
Also enslaves.
Do not be startled, comrade,
I grasp naked realities.
If I believed as you believe
I should become a monk
Vowed to eternal silence.

(*Silence is about to settle heavily upon the hall.* FIRST WORKMAN *comes in.*)

FIRST WORKMAN. I am to report:
We have advanced three times
Against the station.
The square is heaped with dead.
The enemy is well entrenched and armed
With liquid flame, mines, poison gas.
THE NAMELESS. Three times you advanced.
The fourth time?
FIRST WORKMAN. The fourth time never came—
The enemy
Ventured a sortie.
THE NAMELESS. You held your ground.
Do you need reinforcements?
FIRST WORKMAN. We are shattered.
THE NAMELESS. We must expect such checks.
Listen: Go to the thirteenth district.
The reserves are there.
Go—hurry!

(*Workman goes.*)

THE WOMAN. Men have been killed, he said,
Hundreds of men,
Killed.
Did I not cry to heaven against war
Yesterday—and to-day
Suffer my brothers to be done to death?
THE NAMELESS. There is confusion in your views.
In yesterday's war we were slaves.
THE WOMAN. And to-day?
THE NAMELESS. In to-day's war we are free.

(*Silence is feverish.*)

THE WOMAN. In both wars . . . people . . .
In both wars . . . Man . . .

(*Silence reels. A* SECOND WORKMAN *rushes in.*)

SECOND WORKMAN. The post office is lost!
Our men in flight!
No quarter from the enemy!
Prisoners' fate is death!

(FIRST WORKMAN *hurries in.*)

FIRST WORKMAN. I come from the thirteenth district—
My effort failed.
The streets are barricaded,
The district has surrendered,
Our men are handing over
Their arms.

THIRD WORKMAN. The town is lost!
Our work has failed!
THE WOMAN. Is doomed to fail.
THE NAMELESS. Once more: be silent, comrade!
Deeds cannot fail.
Although our forces be too weak to-day,
To-morrow fresh battalions thunder.

(FOURTH WORKMAN *screams into the hall.*)

FOURTH WORKMAN. They are advancing!
O horrible butchery!
My wife is shot! My father
Shot!
THE NAMELESS. They have died for the Masses. . . .
Up with the barricades!
We still defend!
Our blood shall bear fruit!
Let them come!

(WORKMEN *rush into the hall.*)

FIFTH WORKMAN. They are mowing down the people:
Men, women, children—all!
Never surrender, to be killed
Like captive cattle!
They are mowing down the people.
We must arm.
The laws of warfare saved the soldiers,
But *we* are shot down like wild beasts
Escaped from cages.
A price is on our heads.
But we have arms
And bourgeois prisoners.
I have ordered
Half to be shot—
The other half
Forms our shock troops.
THE NAMELESS. You avenge your brothers . . .
The Masses are revenge for the injustice
Of centuries.
The Masses are revenge!
THE WORKMEN. Revenge!
THE WOMAN. Stop! You are crazed with battle.
I bar your path.
The masses should be people bound together
By love.
Masses should be community.
Community is not revenge.

Community destroys the ground
And the foundation of all wrongs
And plants a seed of justice.
Humanity, taking revenge,
Shatters itself. . . .
Half of them shot?
That was not self-defence——
Blind rage—not service to the Cause!
Do you kill men
In the same spirit as the State
Killed men?
Those men outside
Are under my protection!
I was prepared to silence
My conscience, for the Masses.
I cry:
Shatter the system!
But you would shatter
Mankind.
No, I cannot keep silence, not to-day!
Those prisoners are men,
Born in the blood of groaning mothers—
Are men, immutably our brothers—

THE NAMELESS. For the last time: Silence, comrade!
Force! Force!
They do not spare our bodies:
This bitter battle is not to be won
By pious sentiments—
Pay no attention to this woman—
It is the idle babble of her sex.

THE WOMAN. I call a halt!
And you . . . who are you?
Does lust of power, caged for centuries,
Impel you?
Who . . . are you?
O God . . . who are . . . you?
Slayer or Saviour?
Slayer . . . or . . . Saviour?
Nameless—your face?
You are . . . ?

THE NAMELESS. The Masses!

THE WOMAN. You . . . Masses!
You are more than I can bear!
I shield the men outside.
I have been many years your comrade;
I know that you have suffered more than I.
I have grown up in sunlit rooms,
Have never known the pangs of hunger,

Nor heard the crazy rattle of decaying walls;
Yet I feel with you,
Know you.
Look, I come as a begging child,
In all humility. O hear me:
Break the foundations of injustice,
Destroy the secret chains of servitude—
But throw away
The weapons of the mouldering centuries!
Revenge is not the will to new and living forms,
Revenge is not the Revolution;
Revenge is but the axe that splits
The crystal, glowing, angry, iron will
To Revolution.

THE NAMELESS. How dare you, woman of your class,
Poison this hour of fate?
I find another meaning in your words:
You shield your friends and first companions.
That is your deeper motive:
Treason! you betray.

(*The* MASSES *in the hall crowd angrily round the* WOMAN.)

A SHOUT. Intelligentsia!
A SHOUT. Stand her
Back to the wall!
Let her be shot!

THE NAMELESS. To shield the prisoners is treason.
This is the hour for action,
For ruthless action.
Who is not for us, is against.
Masses must live.

THE MASSES IN THE HALL. Must live!

THE NAMELESS. I arrest you.

THE WOMAN. I shield . . . my friends . . . my first companions?
No, I am shielding you!
You, who yourselves
Have lined yourselves up to be shot.
I shield our souls!
I shield mankind . . . to all eternity, mankind!
Insane denouncer—
You read fear into my words?
I never chose so basely—
Oh, you lie . . . you lie. . . .

(*A* WORKMAN *enters the hall.*)

WORKMAN. A prisoner is shouting
And shouting again
For our woman-leader.

THE NAMELESS. That is proof.
THE WOMAN. Once more . . . you lie.
Who wants to see me . . . who?
Perhaps my husband.
Never again could I betray you for his sake.
You, only you, betray yourselves—
I know no more than that.

(*The* NAMELESS *leaves the platform and disappears among the* MASSES *in the hall.* WORKMEN *press in from outside.*)

WORKMEN. Lost.
SHOUTS. Fly!
Fight!

(*Single shots heard outside. The* WORKMEN *throng about the door.*)

SHOUTS. The door is bolted!
Trapped like hares!

(*Silence, awaiting death.*)

SHOUT. To die!

(*Someone begins to sing the Internationale* [*or the Marseillaise*]*; the rest join in. Mightily.*)

(*Suddenly, a brief volley of machine-guns. The song breaks, crumbles. The principal and side entrances are burst open. Soldiers with rifles levelled stand in the doorways.*)

OFFICER. Resistance useless.
Hands up!
Hands up, I say!

[*One by one they put up their hands.*]

Where is your leader?

[*To the* WOMAN.]

Put up your hands.
You disobey?
Put on the handcuffs.

(SOLDIERS *handcuff the* WOMAN. *The stage darkens.*)

SIXTH PICTURE

(*A Dream Picture.*)

SCENE.—*Boundless space. In its kernel a cage on which a ball of light plays. A* PRISONER *crouching in the cage* (*the face of the* WOMAN). *Beside the cage the* GUIDE *in the form of a* WARDER.

THE PRISONER. Where am I?
THE WARDER. In the showhouse of humanity.
THE PRISONER. Drive away the shadows.
THE WARDER. Only you can drive them away.

(*From anywhere, grey, headless shadows.*)

FIRST SHADOW. Do you know me,
My slayer?
I was shot.
THE PRISONER. I am not
Guilty.

(*From anywhere, grey, headless shadows.*)

SECOND SHADOW. Me also
You have slain.
THE PRISONER. You lie.

(*From anywhere, grey, headless shadows.*)

THIRD SHADOW. And me
You have slain.
FOURTH SHADOW. And me.
FIFTH SHADOW. And me.
SIXTH SHADOW. And me.
THE PRISONER. Warder!
O Warder!

(*The* WARDER *laughs.*)

THE WOMAN. I did not will
This blood.
FIRST SHADOW. But you kept silence.
SECOND SHADOW. Kept silence at the storming
Of the town hall.
THIRD SHADOW. Kept silence at the theft
Of weapons.
FOURTH SHADOW. Kept silence through the battle.

FIFTH SHADOW. Kept silence at the calling up
Of the reserves.
SIXTH SHADOW. You are guilty.
ALL SHADOWS. Guilty.
THE PRISONER. I wished to save the others
From death.
FIRST SHADOW. You deceive yourself. Before then
We were shot.
ALL SHADOWS. You
Are our slayer.
THE PRISONER. Then am I——
SHADOWS. Guilty.
Thrice guilty.
THE PRISONER. I . . . am . . . guilty.

(*The* SHADOWS *pale. From anywhere* BANKERS *in top-hats.*)

FIRST BANKER. Shares in guilt
On offer
At par.
SECOND BANKER. Shares in guilt
No longer valid.
THIRD BANKER. A bad investment,
Shares in guilt.
A scrap of paper.
BANKERS. Shares in guilt
Booked as a loss.

(*The* PRISONER *sits up.*)

THE PRISONER. I . . . am . . . guilty.

(*The* BANKERS *fade.*)

THE WARDER. You fool!
You sentimentalist!
Were they alive
They'd dance about the gilded altar,
Where thousands offered sacrifice.
You too.
THE PRISONER. I am guilty
Being man!
THE WARDER. Masses are guilty.
THE PRISONER. Then am I doubly
Guilty.
THE WARDER. All life is guilt.
THE PRISONER. But then, it *had* to be
That I am guilty?
THE WARDER. Each lives his life.
Each dies his death.

As trees and flowers,
So do men
Grow in a pre-ordained
And fated form.
A form created in unfolding
And in its own destruction
Still created. Find the answer
For yourself.
But life is all
That is.

(*From anywhere, prisoners in convicts' clothes surround the* PRISONER. *A pointed cap on their heads, to which is fastened a scrap of cloth with slits for the eyes, covering their faces. On the breast of every prisoner is a number. With monotonous and soundless rhythm they march in a square about the cage.*)

THE PRISONER. Who are you?
Numbers,
Without a face!
Who are you?
Masses
Without a face!
A DISTANT MUFFLED ECHO. Masses . . .
THE PRISONER. God!
ECHO (*receding*). Masses . . .

(*Silence drips.*)

THE PRISONER (*screams out*). Masses are fate.
Masses are guiltless.
THE WARDER. Man is guiltless.
THE PRISONER. God is guilty.
ECHO (*far away*). Guilty—
Guilty—
Guilty—
THE WARDER. God is in you.
THE PRISONER. Then I will overcome this God.
WARDER. Worm!
You blaspheme
God.
THE PRISONER. Is it I
Who blaspheme God?
Or does God blaspheme
Mankind?
This law,
This horror, this inexorable guilt,
Entangling man with man!

God,
Summoned to Justice,
I accuse!

ECHO (*far away*). To Justice.

(*The marching* PRISONERS *stand still. Their arms shoot upwards.*)

THE PRISONERS. We accuse.

(*The* PRISONERS *fade.*)

THE WARDER. You are made whole.
Now leave the cage.
THE PRISONER. I am free?
THE WARDER. Unfree!
Free!

(*The stage darkens.*)

SEVENTH PICTURE

A PRISONER'S *cell is indicated. Small table, bench and iron bedstead let into the wall. Small barred window with opaque glass. The* WOMAN *sits at the table.*

THE WOMAN. O path through the ripe wheat-fields
In August days . . .
Wandering in the wintry mountains
Before dawn. . . .
Tiny beetles in the breath of noon . . .
O world. . . .

(*Silence spreads gently about the* WOMAN.)

Did I crave a child?

(*Silence stirs.*)

O cleft and struggle of all living!
Welded to husband—welded to work.
To husband—to foe . . .
To foe?
Bound to the foe?
Bound to myself? . . .
That he would come. I need conviction.

(*The cell is unlocked. The* HUSBAND *enters.*)

THE HUSBAND. Woman, I come. . . .
Come! Since you called me.
THE WOMAN. Husband!
Husband. . . .
THE HUSBAND. I bring you good news.
Your name—my name—is safe from smirching.
The investigations showed you guiltless
Of the crime of murder.
Take courage, your death sentence is not yet confirmed.
For all your crime against the State,
Right-thinking people respect motives,
High principles and honour.
THE WOMAN (*sobs softly*). I am guiltless . . .
Guiltlessly guilty . . .
THE HUSBAND. Yes, you are guiltless.
To the right-thinking, that is certain.

THE WOMAN. To the right-thinking!
In my raw sorrow
I am glad that no disgrace
Falls on your name.
THE HUSBAND. I knew that you were guiltless.
THE WOMAN. Yes, you knew . . .
Respect for motives—so respectable you are—
I see you now so clearly!
Yet you are guilty—husband,
You—guiltier than I of death.
THE HUSBAND. Woman, I came to you . . .
Woman . . . your word is hate.
THE WOMAN. Hate? Not hate.
I love you—love you in my bones and blood.
THE HUSBAND. I warned you of the Masses.
Who stirs the Masses, stirs up hell.
THE WOMAN. Hell? Who created hell—
Conceived the tortures of your golden mills
Which grind, grind out your profit, day by day?
Who built the prisons? Who cried "holy war"?
Who sacrificed a million lives of men—
Pawns in a lying game of numbers?
Who thrust the masses into mouldering kennels,
That they must bear to-day
The filthy burden of your yesterday?
Who robbed his brothers of their human face,
Made them mechanic,
Forced and abased them to be cogs in your machines?
The State! You!
THE HUSBAND. My life is duty.
THE WOMAN. Oh yes, duty, duty to the State
You are—respectable!
I see you clearly. . . .
You! tell right-thinking people
That they are never right.
Guilty they are—
Guilty are we all . . .
Yes, I am guilty—guilty to myself—
Guilty before mankind.
THE HUSBAND. I came to you. . . .
Do you sit here in judgment?
THE WOMAN. Yes, here, a court of judgment
Comes to be.
I, the accused, I am the judge,
I prosecute, I pronounce guilty
And I absolve . . .
For in the end, this guilt—
Oh! do you guess who bears the final guilt?—

Since of necessity,
Man must desire to do:
And deeds grow red with blood of men—
Man must needs will to live:
And seas of blood rise round him—
Oh! do you guess who bears the final guilt? . . .
Give me your hand,
Beloved of my blood,
For I have overcome myself—
Myself and you.

(*The* HUSBAND *shudders. Thoughts distort his face. He stumbles out.*)

THE WOMAN. Give me your hand,
Give me your hand, my brother—
You too, my brother . . .
You . . . gone . . . you needs must go . . .
The last road leads across the snow-fields.
The last road knows no guide.
The last road is motherless,
The last road is loneliness.

(*The door is opened. The* NAMELESS *enters.*)

THE NAMELESS. Have you recovered from delusion?
Have you dispersed your dreams?
Has the sharp knife of understanding pierced your heart?
Did the judge say "mankind" and "I forgive you"?
The lesson has been wholesome
And I congratulate you on conversion.
Now you're for us again.
THE WOMAN. You? Who sends you?
THE NAMELESS. The Masses.
THE WOMAN. Then I am not forgotten?
The message—the message?
THE NAMELESS. I am to bring you freedom.
THE WOMAN. Freedom!
Life! . . .
We are to escape? Is all prepared?
THE NAMELESS. Two warders have been bribed.
The third, him at the gate, I shall strike down.
THE WOMAN. Strike down . . . for me . . . ?
THE NAMELESS. No, for the Cause.
THE WOMAN. I have no right
To gain my life by this man's death.
THE NAMELESS. The Masses have a right to you.
THE WOMAN. What of the warder's right?
The warder is a man.

THE NAMELESS. As yet there are no men.
On this side men of the Masses,
On that side men of the State.
THE WOMAN. To be a man is plain, is primal.
THE NAMELESS. Only the Masses are holy.
THE WOMAN. The Masses are not holy.
Force made the Masses,
Injustice of possession made the Masses.
The Masses are instinct, necessity,
Are credulous humility,
Revenge and cruelty,
The Masses are blind slaves
And holy aspiration.
The Masses are a trampled field,
A buried people.
THE NAMELESS. And action?
THE WOMAN. Action and more than action!
To deliver—
Set free in Masses their humanity,
Set free in Masses their community.
THE NAMELESS. The rough wind at the gate
Will cure you!
Hurry!
The time is short.
THE WOMAN. You are not release.
You are not redemption.
I know you, who you are.
"Strike down!" Yes, you eternally strike down.
You are the bastard child of war,
You poor new hangman and high executioner.
Your watchwords of salvation: "death" and "extirpate"!
Throw off your mantle of fine words—
It is worn thin as paper!
THE NAMELESS. The murder-chiefs fight for the State.
THE WOMAN. They do not kill for joy of killing;
They, like you,
Believe their mission.
THE NAMELESS. They fight for the oppressor-state,
We for mankind.
THE WOMAN. You murder for mankind,
As they, deluded, murdered for their State.
Some even thought
That by their State, their Fatherland,
They might redeem the earth.
I see no difference.
These murder for one country,
And for all countries, those.
These kill men for a thousand men,

And those for millions.
Who takes life for the State,
Him you call hangman.
Who takes life for humanity,
Him you enwreathe,
Call moral, a good citizen, a noble and great man.
You even speak of healing force, of holy violence!

THE NAMELESS. Indict those others, indict life.
Shall I allow more millions to be enslaved,
Because their masters may be honest men?
How will it lessen your own guilt,
If you keep silence.

THE WOMAN. By force, the smoky torch of violence,
We shall not find the way.
Strangely you lead us to the promised land—
The ancient land of human slavery!
If fate thrusts you into these times,
Allotting power
To you to overpower those,
Despairing,
Who yearn for you as a new Saviour,
Then I shall know
This fate hates man.

THE NAMELESS. The Masses count, not man.
No, you are not our heroine, our leader!
Each carries his infirmities of origin;
And you birth-marks of your class—
Weakness and self-deception.

THE WOMAN. No, you do not love people!

THE NAMELESS. Our Cause comes first.
I love the people that shall be,
I love the future.

THE WOMAN. People come first.
You sacrifice to dogmas,
The people that are now.

THE NAMELESS. Our Cause demands their sacrifice.
But you betray the Masses, you betray
The Cause.
You must decide to-day.
Who wavers, helps our masters—
The masters who oppress and starve us—
Who wavers,
Is our foe.

THE WOMAN. If I took but one human life,
I should betray the Masses.
Who acts may only sacrifice himself.
Hear me: no man may kill men for a cause.
Unholy every cause that needs to kill.

Whoever calls for blood of men,
Is Moloch.
So God was Moloch,
The State Moloch,
And the Masses—
Moloch.

THE NAMELESS. Then who is holy?

THE WOMAN. One day . . .
Community . . .
Free people, freely working together.
Mankind, fulfilling its measure of deeds
Freely.
Work. People.

THE NAMELESS. You lack the courage
To take upon yourself
Action—hard action.
Only by ruthless action
Can this free people
Come to be.
Atone then, by your death.
Perhaps your death is useful to us.

THE WOMAN. I live eternally.

THE NAMELESS. You live too soon.

(*The* NAMELESS *leaves the cell.*)

THE WOMAN. And you lived yesterday;
You live to-day;
To-morrow you will die.
But I—
Turning and circling—
I
Come into being
Eternally.
I shall become
Cleaner, more guiltless,
I shall become
Mankind.

(*The* PRIEST *enters.*)

THE PRIEST. I come to help you in your last hours.
The Church does not deny her care
Even to you.

THE WOMAN. Who sent you?

THE PRIEST. The state officials
Instructed me to come.

THE WOMAN. Where were you on the day of sentence?
Go.

THE PRIEST. God forgives even you.
I know your case.
Mankind is good, you dreamed.
So you committed nameless crimes
Against the sanctity of State and order.
Mankind is evil from the first.
THE WOMAN. Mankind gropes towards goodness.
THE PRIEST. A lie of decadence,
Born of decay, despair and flight,
Protected by the waxen shell
Of borrowed faith
And threatened with bad conscience!
Believe me, men do not
Even aspire.
THE WOMAN. Men grope for goodness.
Even their evil doings wear the mask
Of goodness.
THE PRIEST. Peoples become, peoples decay,
The earth knows no millennium.
THE WOMAN. I believe!
THE PRIEST. Remember:
Greed of power and greed of lust—
These are the rhythms of life.
THE WOMAN. I believe!!
THE PRIEST. The world is endless and unchanging change of forms,
Mankind is helpless, God is his one deliverance.
THE WOMAN. I believe!!!
But I am cold . . . go, now,
Go!

(*The* PRIEST *leaves the cell. The* OFFICER *enters.*)

THE OFFICER. Here is your sentence.
In spite of mitigating circumstances,
Your crime against the State
Must be atoned.
THE WOMAN. So you will have me shot?
THE OFFICER [*as if giving words of command*]. Orders are orders and obedience obedience.
The welfare of the State. Peace. Order.
The duty of a soldier.
THE WOMAN. And of a man?
THE OFFICER. All conversation is forbidden
By my orders.
THE WOMAN. I am ready.

(*The* OFFICER *and the* WOMAN *go out. For some seconds the cell remains empty. Two Female Prisoners in convicts' clothes steal in and stand by the door.*)

FIRST PRISONER. Did you see the officer?
What a golden uniform!
SECOND PRISONER. I saw the coffin—in the washroom—
A yellow box.

(*The* FIRST PRISONER *sees some bread on the table and pounces upon it.*)

FIRST PRISONER. Bread there!
I'm hungry! hungry! hungry!
SECOND PRISONER. Bread for me, for me—
Bread for me!
FIRST PRISONER. A looking-glass! Fine!
Hide it. Evenings in my cell.
SECOND PRISONER. Silk scarf!
Bare breast and silk scarf!
Hide it! Evenings in my cell!

(*The harsh rattle of a volley bursts into the cell. The Prisoners spread their hands wide in fright. The* FIRST PRISONER *takes the mirror from her pocket hastily and lays it back on the table. She falls on her knees and sobs out:*)

FIRST PRISONER. Sister, why do we do such things?

(*Her arms hang into space with an immense helplessness. The* SECOND PRISONER *takes the silk scarf from her pocket and hastily lays it back on the bed.*)

SECOND PRISONER. Sister, why do we do such things?

(SECOND PRISONER *breaks down, hiding her head in her lap.*)

(*The stage closes.*)

HINKEMANN

A Tragedy, translated by VERA MENDEL

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What a golden uniform!
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HINKEMANN

A Tragedy, translated by VERA MENDEL

The tragedy of " Hinkemann " was written in 1921–1922 in the prison-fortress of Niederschœnenfeld. It was first published in Germany in 1922. In 1923 an incomplete translation into English appeared with the title " Hobbleman " in a periodical publication called " Germinal." A Yiddish version of " Hinkemann," entitled " The Red Laugh," has been performed by the Yiddish Players of New York in that city and elsewhere.

V. M.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Eugene Hinkemann
Margaret Hinkemann (his wife)
Mrs. Hinkemann (his mother)
Paul Grosshahn
Fanny (Margaret's friend)
Max Knatsch
Sebaldus Singegott
Michael Unbeschwert
Peter Immergleich
The Proprietor of a Travelling Show
Working Men and Women
Some Twentieth-century Types as Passers-by

" A man who has no strength for dreams
has lost the strength to live."

HINKEMANN

ACT ONE

Scene I

Indicates the Kitchen-living Room of a Workman's House. Maggie Hinkemann *is pottering about at the range.* Eugene Hinkemann *comes in. He sits down. His right hand lies before him on the table. He is clutching some small object at which he stares incessantly.* (Hinkemann *must speak without any fluency or pathos. His speech is that of simple folk—laboured and toneless.*)

Maggie. Did mother give you the coals?

(Eugene *is silent.*)

Gene! I'm asking you: did mother give you the coals? Answer me. You'd think his wits are wandering. Gene! Do say something. What's to become of us? Not a bit of wood, not a bit of coal. Gene! Do you want me to burn the bedstead to keep the range going?

Gene. The little creature. Such lovely colours. Its heart is beating so hard I can feel it with my hands. Sitting in the dark. Now it'll always be in the dark.

Maggie. What have you got there, Gene?

Gene. And you can stand there by the range! I wonder the saucepan doesn't drop out of your hands! Can't you feel a great darkness coming over you? A creature, a little live thing, might be you or me. So pleased with its little self. Chirrup, chirrup—you know how they chirrup away in the mornings? Pleased to see the light again, they are—tweet, tweet! But now—but now! When I walked in she had just put out its eyes with a red-hot knitting-needle . . . (*He groans aloud.*)

Maggie. What? Who?

Gene. Your mother. Your own mother. Fancy a mother putting out the eyes of a goldfinch because the paper said that blind birds sing better! I chucked her coals on the floor, I did; and the ten bob she gave me. Maggie, I punished your mother the same as you'd punish a child that was cruel to animals. But then I let her go; because I seemed to remember—it was horrible—didn't I use to do the same thing and think nothing of it? The feelings of an animal, well, what about it? Wring its neck, cut its throat, put a bullet through it—who cares? When I was in good health all that

PAUL. The likes of us can't come to judgment. Even if there were one, we poor devils would have to go to heaven, because these blasted swindlers don't give us time for any sins. And anyhow that would only be right as a reward for making our bosses so damn comfortable in this world. Anyway I'm an atheist. Don't believe in God any more. Which God, I ask you? The Jew's God? The heathen's God? The Christian's God? The Frenchies' God? The German God?

GENE. I shouldn't wonder if they'd all got stuck on the barbed wire in No-man's-land. The god of battles, that's them—all the lot of them.

MAGGIE. All my life I've believed in God's justice. You can't take that from me.

PAUL. If God were just, Missis, he'd have to *act* just. But does he? The dear, just, merciful God! Not he! Come, we know better'n that by now. God and my King! God and my country! God and murder! God and Mammon! All in the name of God. You'd think the gentry say "God" wants this, that, and the other thing whenever they're ashamed to say "*I* want." Sounds better! People fall for it. I'd leave believing in God to people who can make a profit out of it. The likes of us aren't fighting for the next world, but for this; we're not on the side of the angels, we're on the side of the workers, we are.

GENE. Fighting for the workers is all very well. But to go and fight for the works, for those blasted machines that break your bones before they're fairly grown—why, I used to dread going to the works of a morning, couldn't think how I'd get through the day, and when the bell rang in the evening, I'd do a bolt out of doors like a mad thing!

PAUL. Machines don't bother me. *I'm* the boss of the machine. When I'm working in the factory I often think to myself: I'll teach that blasted old machine who's the boss. Let the damn thing whizz and creak and bang, so long as I'm driving it—driving it hard, driving it till it fairly sweats blood, as you might say. Makes me laugh to see it banging his old head off. Whoa, old horse, I say, smell the whip! You'll swallow anything I damn well feed you and you'll turn out just what I tell you to. I'm the fellow who gives *you* orders, understand? Buck up, Gene, you've only got to be a man, to boss a machine.

GENE (*softly*). Sometimes in this world it's easier to be like God than to be a man.

MAGGIE (*stares strangely at* PAUL). How you do excite yourself, Paul Grosshahn.

(PAUL *grunts deprecatingly.*)

GENE. It's not his *machines* he gets excited about.

MAGGIE. What do you mean?

GENE. Do you want me to tell you? It's women.

PAUL. Well, why not? What else is there in the world for the likes of us? As soon as you're born, the old man starts cursing because

there's another mouth to feed. When you go to school in the morning you're hungry ; and when you go to bed at night your innards rumble with emptiness. And after that you go through the mill ; sell your horse-power, like so much petrol, for the use of the boss. Turn yourself into a blasted hammer or a lever or a penholder or a flatiron, as you might say. That's life, that is. What else is there ? The only bit of fun a man gets out of it is women. No one can come interfering with *that*. A man's his own boss about that. He can tell the boss and the police and the lot of them to go to hell ; this is where *I* come in ; you keep off the grass ! It's all very well for the rich ; they get all sorts of fun—music, books, the sea. But the likes of us ? We read a book once in a while, but as for settling down to it day after day—we haven't the grit, we didn't learn enough for that at school. The same with music ; grand opera is all very well, but give me a revue or something nice and bright like the Merry Widow—you know how it goes ? (*Hums the opening of the Merry Widow waltz.*) Or a waltz on the pennyano in the pub to give you a dance with your girl—that's the stuff for me ! Women mean ever so much more to us than they do to the rich. They're, as you might say, the kernel of life. And if that goes bad on you, you might as well go and hang yourself right away, mightn't you ?

GENE. I dare say——

PAUL. You're a married woman, Missis, so there's no need to mince matters ; and I say, what would a man like me get out of life if he couldn't go with his girl every day ?

(GENE *gazes intently at* MAGGIE.)

What do you say to that, Missis ?

MAGGIE. I think . . . (*shyly*) I think women aren't all alike.

GENE (*jumps up*). I'll get work, Maggie, old girl. Never you fear. Then I'll be able to give you a Christmas present.

PAUL. Waste of time—there's nothing doing.

GENE. Just you wait and see, Paul, my lad ! So long, Maggie.

(*Goes out. A few moments of silence.*)

PAUL. A great hefty fellow like that—fit to go into the ring—shame that he can't get a job. And never gets down in the mouth about it. You're a lucky woman, aren't you ?

MAGGIE (*stares at him blankly*). Yes.

PAUL. I don't half envy Gene when I see you two together.

(MAGGIE *drops her head on her hands and weeps.*)

PAUL. What's up, Missis ? What have I said ? I meant no harm. Why're you're crying ! What is it ? Shall I go and fetch Gene ? I dare say I could catch him up.

MAGGIE (*sobbing aloud*). My head's bursting ! I'm going off my head ! I'll scream—I'll scream my head off !

PAUL (*concerned*). Are you ill ? Can I do anything for you ? Or maybe you're in the family way ? It does take some women like that.

MAGGIE. O my God—O my God—it's not that—(*laughs hysterically*) it's only that I'd be thankful to be lying in my grave!

PAUL. What, isn't he good to you? Does he knock you about?

MAGGIE. I'll tell—yes, I'll tell—I'll tell—I'm only a woman after all. . . . My man, my Gene—well, you see, my Gene isn't—he isn't properly a man at all. . . .

PAUL. Are you sure you're not going to be ill, Missis? Maybe you're feverish?

MAGGIE. Oh no. My Gene—it was in the war they did him in—and now he's a cripple, in a manner of speaking. Oh, I'm ashamed to tell you right out. You see—you see—he's not really a man any more if you know what I mean. . . .

(*She claps her hand on her mouth as if she were scared of her words as soon as they are understood.* PAUL *gives one loud guffaw.*)

Christ! What have I done now? You're laughing at me. Oh, for shame! How can you? I'd never have thought it of you.

PAUL. Oh, excuse me, it just popped out—you know how things pop out? When you hear that sort of thing, you can't really help laughing. (*With pious indignation.*) But you know a man like that has no business to keep you—selfish of him, I call it—if he really cared for you he'd let you go.

(*He begins to stroke* MAGGIE *and she leans up against him.*)

MAGGIE. It's not so easy as you think, Paul. It's not easy to know *what* to think. Sometimes you think one thing and sometimes another. I'm so *sorry* for him. Such a fine chap he was before the war. So full of life. But now he can't do anything but grouse from morning till night. Grousing at everyone and everything—even God. And when he looks at me, he looks right through me as if I weren't human at all. I might be a bit of furniture. Sometimes I'm really frightened to go near him—I can't abide him—it makes me sick to look at him. (*She shudders with disgust.*) O my God, what's to become of us?

PAUL (*more and more tenderly*). Have a good cry, my dear; that's right. Do you good. My mother always used to say, swallowing your tears only chokes you.

MAGGIE. You won't tell him I told you? Promise? I'd do myself in.

PAUL. Not a word, Maggie, trust me. I've done a month in prison before now because I'd promised to hold my tongue. You don't need to worry. A young woman like you—look at me—you can't stand another year of this, grieving the way you do. Maggie darling . . . darling Maggie. . . . (*Kisses her.*)

MAGGIE. This is wickedness.

PAUL. Wickedness? Not a bit of it; it's nature, that's what it is, human nature. The parsons and the gentry preach about sin—but *I* say it would be a sin to stick to that man—who isn't a man—a sin against nature. Anyway, faithful wives are another of their fairy tales.

They keep that to preach to us on Sundays. But as for them—a friend of mine used to go with the bank manager's lady. . . .

MAGGIE. There's someone on the stairs—if that's Gene. . . .

PAUL. I'd better be off. Maggie, come round to my room one day. You know the address? There's nothing to be scared about, no one ever comes near the place. Come and talk things over and have a good cry—if you know what I mean? Won't you?

MAGGIE. I don't know . . .

PAUL. Do you remember how we used to play in the park and build castles on the sand-heap, Maggie darling? I had my eye on you even in those days when you were nothing but a kid. Maggie darling, you'll come, won't you?

(MAGGIE *shakes her head.*)

(*With sudden brutality.*) Not so much fuss about it. You'll come!

MAGGIE. I——

PAUL. You shall!

MAGGIE (*consenting*). Well . . .

PAUL. So long, darling!

(*Goes out.*)

MAGGIE. I'm only a woman after all. I don't rightly know . . . life's so hard.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene I

Indicates the outside of a Travelling Peep-Show. The Showman *is sitting on a stool among his pots and pans.* Gene *stands before him.*

Gene (*pointing out a paragraph in a newspaper*). There!

Showman. What do you mean: "There"?

Gene. It's printed here. (*He reads out the words laboriously in a sing-song voice.*) "Wanted: a powerful man for a sensational turn. Liberal remuneration. Only men in first-class condition need apply."

Showman. That's right. Face the light, my man. (*Feels* Gene's *muscles.*) Biceps flabby. Chest—thighs—calves—flabby. But it's just the sort of thing I want. That fleshy sort of fake looks as powerful as a grizzly. That's first rate. You're hired. Shake.

Gene. What have I got to do?

Showman. Oh, that—it's simple, my boy! Listen to me. The public is fed up with sobstuff. Only pacifists fall for it nowadays. That's not my idea of business. The public likes *blood*. Plenty of it. Christians or no Christians! Spells success in my business. Public interest and private interest go together. (*Picks up his flute.*) See that. (*Plays a few notes.*) Pap for old maids. Roses and raptures! Slobber and treacle. Bah! (*Seizes two drumsticks.*) See this? (*Begins to beat his drum.*) That's the stuff to give 'em. (*Goes on beating tattoos.*) The people eat it. Lap it up and wallow in it. (*More tattoos.*) Glory, Glory! That's the life!

Gene. Do you mind telling me——

Showman. Just coming to it. Here's a cageful of rats. And a cageful of mice. Your turn. There's a fortune in it. At every performance you take one rat and one mouse, bite a hole in their throats; take a suck of blood; flourish—and off! Brings the house down.

Gene. Live animals. No, sir, I can't do it.

Showman. Bunkum! Ten bob a day. All expense found. All over in half an hour. Silly prejudices. All a matter of habit. Think of the perquisites. You'll paper your walls with proposals from flappers. Chuck your moral scruples overboard. Nowadays a girl's virtue is easily mended. You've only got to call in a specialist.

Gene (*greedily*). Ten bob a day. . . .

Showman. Beginning to nibble? (*Chuckles.*)

Gene. It's foul, it's horrible—with live animals!

SHOWMAN. Well, go and find another job—if you can. (*Chuckles.*) Nothing doing. What's it to be—yes or no?

GENE (*choking*). It's only—for my wife. (*Breaks out.*) You see, if a person loves you, and you're afraid you might lose her love, when it's all you have left . . . Isn't there any other work you could put me to, sir?

SHOWMAN. Yes or no?

GENE (*stammering and almost moaning*). Oh—ten bob—oh—for the likes of us—it's just a bloody merry-go-round—round and round and on and on. . . . I'll do it, sir.

SHOWMAN. That's talking! Mark my words: Prime Ministers and Field-marshals and parsons and circus managers know what's good policy: we give the public what it likes!

(*The stage darkens.*)

SCENE II

Faint candlelight. The outlines of PAUL *and* MAGGIE *are just visible against the back wall.*

PAUL. Do you love me?

MAGGIE. You—you——

PAUL. Gene thinks——

MAGGIE. Leave him be. I hate him—hate him!

PAUL. Funny things women! Why didn't you run away as soon as he came back—as soon as you knew?

MAGGIE. Oh, I don't know. I don't remember. I think I was ashamed to let anyone know.

PAUL. Poor devil! When you come to think of it. . . .

MAGGIE. You're not to think. I won't have it.

PAUL. After all, he's a pal of mine.

MAGGIE. Don't—don't!

PAUL (*after a while*). What happened the first night he got home? Did he try to start anything?

MAGGIE. Oh, stop it, Paul.

PAUL. But even if he were healthy, you'd come to me, wouldn't you? . . . What are you getting up for? What's wrong?

MAGGIE. God ought to strike you dumb—and me and him and everyone. Words—words are nothing but torture now.

(*The stage darkens.*)

SCENE III

A Fair is indicated. There is a Booth so brightly painted that it drowns the din of the barrel-organ and brass bands. On a platform in front of the Booth stands a tattooed woman and GENE, *who is dressed in flesh-pink tights.*

SHOWMAN (*mouthing and rapping out his speech*). Ladies and gentlemen. Walk up. Walk up closer. Listen, behold and admire! In the first act you will see Monachia the Tattooed Lady; she wears the greatest works of art of the old masters in front and the most modern, expressionist, futurist, dadaist confections behind. On her naked body. You won't only see her legs; you won't only see her arms; you won't only see her back: you'll see every single part of her, which by the laws of church and state may only be seen by ladies and gentlemen over eighteen years of age. Between the acts you will see a child being beheaded. A real live child. A thing you have never seen before. A thing you wouldn't see in Africa, nor in Asia, nor in Australia; a thing you can only see in Europe and America. Our last act (*points to* GENE) is Robot, the strong man of the Empire. Powerful as a grizzly bear. Devours live rats and mice before the very eyes of our esteemed public. The hero of the civilized world. The pride and power and manhood of the Empire. He can grind rocks to powder. He can hammer nails through the thickest skull with his bare fist. He can strangle thirty-two men with his finger and thumb. All fly before him. And all who fly must DIE. You haven't seen the world till you've seen him. . . . And we have more sensations for you. Sensations with petticoats as thin as spider's webs, not to be lifted out here. So walk up—walk up, ladies and gentlemen. We won't ask you to pay a shilling; we won't ask you to pay sixpence, thrippence a head is the entrance for to-day only. Owing to our unprecedented success the entrance is only *threepence* a head. So walk up, walk up. First come, first serve. Last warning. The performance is about to begin. *A bell rings.*) Cash ready. Thrippence a head. Walk up—walk up!

A GIRL (*pointing at* GENE). I say, Jess, what would you say to feeling his muscles?

ANOTHER GIRL. Or his ribs. . . .

SHOWMAN (*hears them*). Certainly, ladies. Feel as much as you please. That's not stuffing; that's no fake. That's Robot, the incarnate might of Empire.

(PAUL *and* MAGGIE *come on with their arms round each other's waist. At first they don't see the booth. As they speak the din becomes inaudible but the crowd carries on its business in dumb show.*)

PAUL. This is the life! Are you enjoying yourself, Maggie? Isn't it glorious? Makes you glad to be alive. Like a turn on the roundabouts, Maggie? I'll stand you anything you like now.

MAGGIE. It's like a dream—like a story-book. Six years of worrying, pinching and scraping and grieving I've had. Like a mole that doesn't dare show its nose above ground. Not that I ask for much, Paul. Don't think I expect a lot. A poor girl doesn't look for much, from the start. If you're lucky you work and work every day of your life till you're too old and have to come on your children. If you're not, you get nothing but grousing and rows and knocking about from your man. But this—this is more than I'd ever hoped for.

PAUL. The beginning of a new life for you, Maggie.

MAGGIE (*tenderly*). I say, Paul——

PAUL. What, Maggie?

MAGGIE. Darling. (*Kisses him long and tenderly.*)

PAUL (*with obvious self-satisfaction*). You see, you don't mind all the people any more—bashfulness is just one of those notions as you might say——

SHOWMAN (*makes his voice heard*). Robot, the strong man of the Empire. (*His voice becomes inaudible again.*)

MAGGIE. O Paul! Paul!

PAUL. What's the matter?

MAGGIE. Look there, do you see who that is?

PAUL. Who?

MAGGIE. That man in the tights.

PAUL. How should I know. An acrobat. One of these fellows out of a circus. Here to-day and gone to-morrow.

MAGGIE. That's *him*.

PAUL. That's who?

MAGGIE. Gene.

SHOWMAN (*makes his voice heard*). Devours live rats and mice before the very eyes of our esteemed public. His country's hero. The pride of the Empire. Give us a tune on your muscles, Robot. Careful now—careful of the public.

(GENE *begins sparring and showing the play of his muscles. The* SHOWMAN'S *voice becomes inaudible.*)

PAUL. Did you ever hear of such a fraud! His country's hero—a man without—what they call a eunuch. (*Roars with laughter.*) That's the sort of hero they kept on the home front—the red tabs, the pressmen, the glory-merchants, the diehards, the armchair patriots. . . . That's a fine show to make of a lump of padded putty!

MAGGIE. Stop it, stop it. How can you be so heartless, Paul. What have I done. I'm worse than a street girl, I am. It's better to sell yourself than to sell your man.

PAUL (*catches hold of* MAGGIE'S *arm*). Shut up. Don't be so soft.

MAGGIE. Did you hear what he's doing? Eating live rats and mice. That man wouldn't hurt a fly if he could help it. He even lifted his hand to my mother for putting out the eyes of her goldfinch. He wouldn't let me set mouse-traps in the kitchen because it's wicked to torture animals. And now he has to eat live rats and mice.

PAUL. Well, you don't have to kiss him any more, anyhow.

MAGGIE. I want to kiss him, I'm going to kiss him—here and now—in front of everyone. What have I done to him! Was it his fault that he stopped that bullet? It was my fault for letting him go to the war—his mother's fault—every one's fault—for letting such things happen.

PAUL. Oh, shut up. People are looking at us. Come along or he'll see you.

MAGGIE. I want him to see me. I'll kneel down and confess before

God that I'm no better than a fallen woman. I'm a worm in his sight. Let me go, let me go to him.

PAUL (*holding her close to him*). And supposing it makes you sick to look at him ?

MAGGIE (*simply*). Then I shall love him all the more.

PAUL (*dragging her off*). Oh, come along, you crazy bitch.

SHOWMAN (*makes his voice heard again*). Walk up, ladies and gentlemen—walk up and see all our astounding sensations. (*Goes into the tent.*)

A WORKING WOMAN (*to another*). Because I'm taking those shirts to the pawnshop, you needn't think I haven't any more at home. I've got a solid pure silk cape that my grandmother left me. But there's nothing left to pawn but the shirts. . . . (*They stroll away.*)

(MAGGIE *and* PAUL *at the other side of the stage.* PAUL *is holding on to* MAGGIE, *who is hanging back.*)

MAGGIE. No.

PAUL. You won't come ?

MAGGIE. No.

PAUL. And supposing he finds out that you're going to have a baby ?

MAGGIE. He'll forgive me. He's always been kind.

PAUL. He'll give you a good hiding !

MAGGIE. I've got to do it. I know it is God's will. He has not quite forsaken me in the midst of my sins. This is my punishment, O Lord. Thy will be done. I will love Gene and serve him as if he were my Saviour.

PAUL. Then I shall go straight to him——

MAGGIE. We'll both go straight to him.

PAUL. And tell him that you've been deceiving him.

MAGGIE. It's no use threatening me, Paul. I won't go with you any more. I've never really called my life my own. When I was little I was always waiting for it to begin. And then I saw the world was full of things, wonderful, lovely things—things I couldn't properly get hold of ; and anyhow they were so fine and so soft you wouldn't dare to touch them. You see my hands have always been all rough and dirty—they're only fit to hide under my apron. I didn't care for anyone to see my hands. . . . But now, but now—I think there's nothing in the world that's fit to touch ; it's all as dirty and as ugly as my hands.

PAUL (*raging with wounded vanity*). Then you can go to hell, you snivelling cow ! There are plenty more, I can tell you—I've only to hold up my little finger and they settle on me like bees.

(*They are crowded off the stage. The* SHOWMAN *steps out of the booth with* GENE.)

SHOWMAN. Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen. Hearken, behold and admire ! Walk up, walk up !

(*The stage darkens.*)

Scene IV

Indicates the interior of a modest Public-House. A stout, cheerful, bustling barmaid serving behind the bar. Wooden tables and benches round the room. Max Knatsch, Sebaldus Singegott, Michael Unbeschwert *and others sit at the tables. Two workmen, a* Stonemason *and a* Bricklayer, *stand at the bar. Before the curtain rises, voices are heard quarrelling.*

Stonemason. Not if there was to be a hundred Revolutions. Revolutions can't change nothing. A plumber's better than a plasterer, a blacksmith's better than a tinker, a linotype operator's better than a machine hand, a taxi-driver's better than a van-driver. I'll always be a stonemason and you'll never be anything but a bricklayer.

Bricklayer. Swank, I call it. All right, cocky—you don't mind me taking a drink alongside of your royal highness, I suppose? If I *am* a poor bloody bricklayer. And proud of it, mark you, proud of it I am.

Stonemason. A stone-cutter is an artist, I tell you; and a bricklayer's nothing but a common labourer.

Bricklayer. We get put upon, same as you do. What's the odds?

Stonemason. Well, we've got something to show for it, we have. Didn't we get two bob a day more than you before the war? Doesn't that show you? No, no, cobbler stick to your last, as they say! If you was to ask me to-day to take on your job—I wouldn't half laugh. Why, the nippers at home know better than that. No use trying to drag *me* down. Can't be done, Revolution or no Revolution.

(*They pay and go out quarrelling.*)

Bricklayer. Bit too big for your boots, you are!

Stonemason. Garn, you're balmy!

Bricklayer. Begging your lordship's pardon!

Stonemason. Suck it!

Max Knatsch. Workers of the world unite! "The enlightened proletariat recognizes no class distinctions"—yes, I don't think.

(*He sees* Gene, *who has come in meanwhile and sits at a vacant table.*)

Hallo, Gene; how did you get here?

Gene (*in a hoarse and jerky voice*). My throat's dry. There's a taste of blood—it's beastly, it fairly poisons you. Got to have a drink. Christ, I'm no teetotaller, what's there to gape at?

Max. Me? I'm not gaping. Why should I? *I* don't have to be poisoned before I step around to the pub. The kitchen at home is enough to drive anyone to it—my drawing-room and dining-room and bathroom and laundry all rolled in one—*and* nursery full of wretched kids; and my wife nagging, nagging all day long—no thank you! Give me the pub. Not that husbands aren't to blame too for things being as they are. We go to meetings and talk our heads off about the

brotherhood of man and the great times that are coming, and when we go home we haven't so much as a kind word to throw to our wives.

(*While he is talking* MICHAEL UNBESCHWERT *comes in. Hearing the last words,* MICHAEL *begins talking as soon as he gets inside the door.*)

MICHAEL. Nowadays, comrade, it's the fellows that own the grand houses that get all the fun. Twenty rooms apiece and then they're not satisfied ! But the war started making things hot for them. (*With the impassioned rhetoric of the practised public speaker.*) At last they see the writing on the wall. At last they feel the earth quaking under their feet. They are shaking in their shoes, for their hearts are black but their faces are pale, and their teeth are chattering with fright. Comrades, at last the day is dawning !

SINGEGOTT. But you've not found the true light, brother. The heavenly light comes from the city of God that is not built with hands. You seem to think that all of us working-men are bound to belong to your party. You people don't seem to know that some of us have found our own salvation.

GENE. You see, Michael, you think it's easy to make people happy, but I've been doing a bit of thinking lately and it seems to me that you can't make everyone happy—really happy that is. I think that happiness is something very hard to get, something (*he breathes heavily*) that a man either has or hasn't got.

MICHAEL. You're full of bourgeois ideology, comrade. It really makes me laugh to hear you. (*As if addressing a public meeting.*) In accordance with economic laws, history is about to give birth to a new order of society. The tides are rising and the solid earth crumbles at their advance. So we shall change with changing conditions, until, almost without noticing it, we have become part of the Socialist State, That's not a fairy tale, that's solid scientific fact. Everything is bound to work out according to our programme. Why shouldn't people be happy in the new order ? It's perfectly simple. Instead of producing silks and satins for the idle rich, we shall set to work to produce serviceable woollens cheap enough for everyone to be clothed and warm. Sensible living conditions will produce sensible people, and sensible people are happy. Humanity is rising from the realm of want to the realm of freedom. Surely that's simple enough. (*Turning to* MAX.) But people that think we can take short cuts and skip the logical historical development of events, crazy upstarts with wild sentimental theories instead of scientific facts——

MAX. Will be solemnly denounced from the pulpit. I know, I know—you've got your formula and everyone and everything has to fit it. I know all about your official sermons, but I tell you that what people need is the spirit of Revolution. If the spirit of Revolution is not in them, then all your historical developments and social conditions won't help them. And if they have that spirit of Revolution, then the new age will begin, whatever the conditions. It might be now, to-day. No need to wait for developments. You people can only obey orders ;

you don't know how to take responsibility. Even when, by your own lights, " conditions " have been ripe for action, you've always fallen down on the job.

SINGEGOTT. Neither is your light the true light, brother. I have been born again. I have seen the heavenly light, and my feet are set upon the straight and narrow way.

PETER IMMERGLEICH. What I say is, let me alone and I won't ask nothing better. Peace and quiet is all I ask. But anyone who comes monkeying with me—he'd better look out, that's all!

MICHAEL (*answering* MAX). You're not a regular socialist at all, Max. You're nothing but an anarchist. That's why you can't talk like a responsible being. It's not worth arguing with you until you've at least joined a Party. And as for you, Sebaldus, you're not even class-conscious yet; you're simply fumbling about in the dark. I tell you: proper social conditions is all we need. The rest is simple.

GENE (*answering* MICHAEL). It may be simple. Perhaps you're right. What you said about silks and satins is just my idea. People can't act rightly as long as they haven't enough to eat. The first thing you've got to give a man is enough to eat and a roof over his head, and a little bit more than that—a share of the things that make life worth living for anyone. Till you give him those things you can't expect that he'll act rightly. Perhaps it's just that I'm not so clever as you, comrade. It isn't so easy for me to see how simple it all is. And you're a branch secretary, so you're bound to understand these things better. (MICHAEL *shows signs of taking this amiss.*) I'm not saying anything against the Party. For a working man the Party means a deal more than it does for the other sort. For the rich it's just politics, but for us—well, it might go wrong, there might be really bad rotten spots on it—but all the same it would be—the Party. That means just *everything* for us—all we believe and hope and dream. . . . But look here, supposing a man had something the matter with him that couldn't be cured—something the matter with him inside—or outside, for that matter—that could never get better—would it make him happy if there were to be sensible social conditions.

MICHAEL. I'm afraid I don't understand that question.

GENE. Sorry, I'm afraid I've been a bit muddled in my head since I got my bullet. You see—there's such a lot to understand. Every day of your life things creep up and drag at you and—bowl you over. And all that is too much to get hold of in words—in thoughts. Things are so queer, when you come to think of it. Everything—being alive at all, I mean. It's so queer, it frightens you. There don't seem sense in it somehow. I don't see how a man is to get hold of it at all. Trying to get hold of yourself is like trying to bail out the sea with a pail. You go on living and you understand what it's all about; and then, when you look back, it's quite different and not like it seemed at the time. Sometimes you say to yourself: Well, I'm just a bit of the world—as it might be the tree outside the window—and there's no more sense in trying to get to the bottom of things—asking, What am I? and Why am

I alive? and What does everything mean?—than it would be to ask questions like that about a tree that was growing. There it is, and that's all about it. But all the same I don't see my way—I'm all mixed up—like the world in the Bible before God created the waters and the dry land. All mixed up and all dark. And I keep thinking of it—day in, day out. But look here I want to tell you—I want to explain . . . you see—take the men that got smashed up in the war—what's to become of them?

MICHAEL. Why, they'll be supported by the Socialist State. They will be fed and clothed, and there's no reason why they shouldn't be as well off as anyone else.

GENE. But supposing a man had no arms?

MICHAEL. He'd be given artificial arms. If he could do any work, he'd be given some easy job.

GENE. But supposing he had no legs either?

MICHAEL. The Socialist State would look after him just the same.

GENE. But supposing there was something the matter with his mind?

MICHAEL (*with a robust lack of sentimentality*). Then he'd have to go into an asylum. But mind you, not the sort of asylum we have now, where people are treated like dumb animals. People who are ill will be treated kindly—treated like human beings.

GENE. I don't mean mad people. I mean people who aren't ill, exactly, but who have something hurting them—in their souls—if you take my meaning.

MICHAEL. There are no such people. People with healthy bodies have healthy souls. Common sense will tell you that. And people who are not right in their heads belong in an asylum.

GENE. There's another thing I wanted to ask. Supposing—(*he swallows nervously*) supposing a man had lost his—manhood, as you might say. Supposing *that* had been blown off in the war. What do you think would become of him in a Socialist State?

(PETER *sniggers.*)

MICHAEL (*mopping his brow*). What questions you do ask! Makes me go all hot and cold. Nothing to laugh at, Comrade Immergleich. That sort of thing does happen sometimes.

MAX. That sort of thing makes you feel more like crying than laughing.

SINGEGOTT. A man like that would be bound to find grace; God in His mercy would not leave him in outer darkness.

MICHAEL. Well, if I'm to answer that question—as far as I know science hasn't answered that question yet—oh! stop a moment—what a fool I am! There won't *be* any wars under the new order. That's the answer. Plain common sense.

GENE. Not so plain as all that. When the new order comes, there may be people like that already in the world. How are they going to

be happy? Or the same thing might happen to a man if he had an accident at the works or some other way. How could he be happy?

MICHAEL. That's another devilish difficult question.

MAX. Seems to me you're just trying to pick holes. Better not worry your head about things like that. Soldiers of the Revolution have no business to muddle themselves with such ideas. Accidents like that can't be helped. Casualties have to be sacrificed. The Movement demands sacrifices.

GENE. That's true enough. But there's no reason why one shouldn't talk over these things. Because these things do happen to some people. And while we're talking about it, I think the answer —well, I could tell you a story about a man. He was nothing special —not a delegate or anything. Just one of the rank and file. A working man. A friend of mine he was. I thought a lot of him. He got married when he was twenty. Met his wife at the works. They were a good-looking couple. It was a pleasure to see them together. She was ever such a pretty little thing and he was a great powerful chap. More powerful than I am even. Then the war started and they turned him into a blinking hero. He hadn't any kids. Wasn't earning enough for that. Before the war he thought a lot of his wife, of course; but it wasn't till he got into the trenches that he really found out *how* much. She was so sweet—such pretty ways—such a good wife to him. It made him go all queer to think about her when he was out there. He was always thinking about her. And after a bit he began to think: wouldn't it be nice if we had a youngster?—or two, or three. Boys and girls. She'd make a splendid mother, she would. You see, he was forgetting what a large family really means when you can't make both ends meet. And no wonder—the way we have to live! The things a man would like to know about—the country, fields and trees, the truth about things—how's a working man to find out about them? Work, work from morning till night, ever since you were *so* high. And of a Saturday night you go and see a pack of lies on the movies. About working girls who marry dukes and live happy ever after, and all that silly muck. Christ, what a way to live! When you come to think of it. Never get a chance at anything that isn't cheap and nasty and secondhand. Pack drill, that's what it is—not life. Well, as I was saying: one day he stopped a bullet. Nothing much, just a nice little blighty wound, so he thought. He hadn't had any leave yet. When he got to hospital he started feeling round his bandages. But he didn't think nothing of it. Till he heard someone say—in the next bed—"Hallo," they said, "our eunuch is waking up. He'll get a nasty jar when he finds out what they've done to him." And he thought to himself: they can't be talking about me, surely? What do they mean by that? A eunuch, that's. . . . And he lay still again, quite still; and shut his eyes. The way you turn your head when you don't want to look at something horrible. But he didn't go to sleep the whole of that night. And next morning they told him. Well, the first few days he yelled the house down—

more like an animal it was—till, all of a sudden, he heard himself and noticed he was squeaking and squealing—like a woman. So he shut up. He tried to think about his wife, but as soon as he thought of her he had to shut his eyes and lie down stiff and still the way he did the first day, and shut his eyes. He meant to hang himself. But he didn't have the nerve. So he was sent home. He came along to me first. Because we were pals. Asked me how he was to break it to his wife? Fair gave me the creeps, he did. So *that's* the sort of thing you are, I thought to myself. I was sorry for him, but all the same, he gave me the creeps. If you looked at it one way, it was rather funny. I didn't know what to say to him. I saw him with his wife. I saw what a bad time he was having. But what can you really see that's going on inside a man? There you sit and here I sit. I see you. But what do I see? A man shakes hands with you; you hear him say something; and that's all. What do I really know about you? And what do you really know about me? Nothing. Nothing! (*He breaks out.*) I tell you that man must have been in hell. Fair bleeding his heart away. It's a wonder he managed to go on living at all. . . . Then, one day, he came to see me and you couldn't help noticing how much better he looked. Lovely, he looked. It doesn't sound right to say a man looks lovely. But that man did. Fair shining with happiness he was. You could almost *feel* it. Just because he'd found out that his wife didn't look down on him. She wasn't hating him. She wasn't laughing at him. He didn't care what she did—after all, she was a healthy woman, and he was a cripple—as long as he knew that she loved him just the same. And that woman loved him. You'd hardly think it was possible—but that woman loved—as you might say—his soul.

(*Silence.* PAUL GROSSHAHN *comes in manifestly intoxicated.*)

PAUL. Evening all. What's up? You all lost your tongues? Let's have a tune.

(*Puts coin in the automatic piano, which begins to whine and wheeze and groan and rattle out a marching tune.* PAUL *sits at* GENE'S *table.*)

Evening, Gene.

GENE. Evening.

PAUL (*speaking thickly, with the inarticulacy of intoxication*). Don't wonder your Maggie gave you the go-by . . . you (*snorts with laughter*) —you bleeding hero!

GENE. What say?

PAUL. The in-incarnate might of the Empire! (*Laughs.*) Devours live rats and mice! (*Laughs.*)

GENE. How do you know that? Quiet, Paul—it's too horrible, what I'm doing. I couldn't *tell* you how horrible it is. I'd rather bite through my own veins than do it. There's things that ought not to be allowed. And there am I doing it. . . . You see, it's like this:

Maggie isn't strong in health. You know my pension doesn't go far. It's not my fault that we're out of work. But you see, if a man can't provide for his wife, can't even give her enough to eat, she's liable to take a dislike to him. I've noticed that often with women. And there's no call for her to put up with *that*. So, you see. . . . Promise me you won't say a word to Maggie. Promise, Paul.

PAUL. Promise.

GENE. Maggie is a queer girl. If she was to find out that I've sucked rats' blood she might—I don't know—it would turn her stomach.

PAUL (*with sudden and solemn indignation*). But look here—that stuff about the strongest man and the pride of the Empire—that's what I call a bloody swindle. You'll have the police after you.

GENE (*suspiciously*). What do you mean by that?

PAUL. You know quite well what I mean. What's more, I promised not to tell because I don't *have* to tell Maggie. She's seen you.

GENE (*agitated*). Seen me? What did she say? Did she cry? (*Urgently.*) Tell me what she said, can't you?

PAUL. Cry? What the hell is there to cry about? She laughed. It made her a bit sick at first, but then she laughed.

GENE (*going to pieces completely*). Turned her stomach—and then she laughed. . . . (*Hysterically.*) La—la—la—laugh, oh—ha—ha—la—laughed. . . . She laughed!

PAUL. Well, isn't it laughable, I ask you? He makes himself out to be the strongest man in the world when he isn't a man at all. (*Laughs.*) Not a man at all!

GENE (*shocked into perfect self-control*). Who—who told you that?

PAUL. Who told me? Maggie told me.

GENE. When did she tell you?

PAUL. At the fair.

GENE. How did you two come to be at the fair?

PAUL. Well, what do you expect? A young woman like that. Is she never to have a bit of fun? I'd be ashamed of myself, I would—asking questions like that.

GENE. *I* ought to be ashamed of myself?

PAUL. Do you think it's for me to be ashamed of myself? Or Maggie? What right have you to hang on to her, anyway? She's got grounds for divorce, she has. Even the Catholic Church would allow that.

GENE (*quietly*). That's true. I forgot about that. Your King and Country needs you—and smashes you up—and when you're properly smashed your wife has grounds for divorce. I'd forgotten that's the way things happen. Well, what are you going to do about it? With Maggie, I mean?

PAUL. None of your business.

GENE. That's true again. It's none of my business. Nothing but a ground for divorce, that's all I am. . . . But supposing Maggie

was a stranger and I was asking you as a friend : what are you going to do about it ?

PAUL (*mulishly*). Just what I please.

GENE. But Maggie's not a whore. I mean, these things can be fixed up—they're bound to be—I see that now. I'll give her up. Then you'll marry her ?

PAUL. That's not what she's after. She only wants a bit of fun now and then. And the sooner you know it the better. And if she doesn't get enough fun with me, I'll send her on the streets. Then I'll be in clover.

GENE (*softly but in fierce anger*). You swine, you !

PAUL. Oh, I'm a swine, am I ? Do you really think I'd let her go on the streets. Call yourself a friend of mine !

MAX. What's up, you two ? What's the use of having words at the pub. Go home and take it out of your wives!

PAUL. We weren't having words, we were having a joke.

MAX. Well, if that was a joke I'd like to hear you when you're rowing.

PAUL. You see, we went to the fair and——

GENE (*grips him by the arm*). Paul—stop it. For my sake, for Maggie's sake——

PAUL. And there we saw the most powerful man in the world. A whale of a lad. He devoured live rats and mice, he did——

MAX. A black heathen would know better than to go and look at that !

PAUL. And when I came to look at this chap I found he was a man I know. It would have made a cat laugh—the most powerful man in the world turned out to be a man I knew who had had both his—(*gesture of taking aim*)—bing ! bang !—well, it wasn't a man at all, it was one of these chaps they call eunuchs !

(*All those present, including* SINGEGOTT, *give a loud snort of laughter.* GENE'S *wide tormented eyes are enthralled by their laughter.*)

(*Shouting across the laugh.*) That man was——

(GENE *interrupts him. He rises and stands in a pool of light. At first he speaks heavily and, even in the heat of his passion, has to grope for words ; but in the end his speech is overwhelming in its simplicity.*)

GENE. That man was Hinkemann. Laugh. Laugh, all of you. Go on. *She* laughed. You don't often see a freak of nature. A real live eunuch. Shall I give you a song ? (*Sings in a shrill, squeaky voice.*)

" The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me." . . .

I sing almost as well as a blinded goldfinch, don't I ? . . . Fools ! You don't know what it feels like—torture. What a change there'd have to be before you could build a better world. You fight the bosses ;

you're full of talk about the rich being selfish and mean, and set up with themselves, but you're every bit as bad as they are. You hate each other because one of you swears by one party and one by another. No one trusts his neighbour. No one trusts himself. Everything you do is smothered with envy and treachery.

You have nothing but fine words—wonderful, holy words. "Peace and plenty." Words are all very fine for people in good health. But you don't see the places you can't reach. There are people you *can't* make happy with all your states and society and family and community. Our sufferings begin where your cures end.

Men stand alone;
A great pit opens where there is no help,
And in the sky there is no happiness,
The trees are thick with mockery
And the waves make fun of me.
There is a choking darkness, without love.
No help for me, no help.

(*There is silence for a few moments.* GENE *stumbles out.*)

MAX. Where are you off to?

GENE (*his face distorting his words*). The woman laughed.

(*Goes out.*)

(*The stage is in twilight and the Scene hurries to its end.*)

MICHAEL (*rushing to the door*). Gene, I say, Gene! He's gone. If I'd only known. Conditions are all wrong, that's the trouble.

SINGEGOTT (*rapturously*). I have sinned against the light. I have made mock of the crucified.

PAUL (*in a maudlin whine*). I say, we ought to do something for him——

PETER. You're a swine, you are, and no mistake.

MAX (*jumps up suddenly*). It's all quite simple. No, nothing is simple. . . . Bill please, miss.

CURTAIN

make good nowadays. That's the spirit of the age. Whatever you do make a success of it: boxing, politics, stock exchange, golf champion, copper king, movie star, prophet, jockey, antisemite, agitator, advertising man. Business booming. Take time by the forelock. No pitch so black it won't wash off. Morality: free sample given away with every packet. (*Laughs.*) I cuddled a nigger woman once. There's a race for you. . . . Well, so long. See you at nine sharp to-morrow.

HINKEMANN. No, sir. That's finished.

SHOWMAN. Don't make me laugh. That *would* be good 'un! Now that you've got your hand in? Now you can do it on your head? Like clockwork. (*Sings the tune of the "British Grenadiers."*)

"Of all the world's great heroes
There's none that can compare"—

(*Imitates gesture and sound of biting and sucking.*) Ladies and gentlemen, like a taste of blood? (*Sings.*) "With a tow row, row row, row row." Come again, ladies and gentlemen. Pass your plates up. Don't be bashful. Well, well, Robot—go home and sleep it off.

HINKEMANN. Begging your pardon, sir, I can't come back. The advance you gave me—I'll settle up. . . . Can't have people saying I cheated them. Got to set my house in order.

SHOWMAN. What? D'you mean to say you're serious? Come, come, my man, a joke's a joke, but you can't get away with this. Got you under contract for the season, haven't I? (*Brutally.*) Set the police on you. Drive you to work. Free exchange and barter. Foundation of society. You're violating the sacred rights of property. But I've law and order behind me. Nothing doing. Either you turn up at nine sharp to-morrow or I turn you over to the police. (*His voice softens.*) There, there, Hinkemann, it's all for your own good. Want to keep you out of gaol.

HINKEMANN. Gaol, is it? Those rats and mice I murdered—they were in gaol before they went to the scaffold. And there are people going about like free men who are only walking up and down in gaol—like beasts in a cage. Barred windows that let no light come through. Walls that choke the life out of you. Chains that eat into your flesh. Oh, I'm not afraid of gaol, sir. And anyway (*screaming with hate*) you, sir, you're a devil. I do believe you are the evil one himself. Stuffing people with blood. Stripping people of shame. I . . . I . . . (*threatening gesture*) Oh! I . . . (*gesture of despair*). But there'll be other men who'll—who'll. . . . And, you know, there's a woman too. A woman who laughed at me. My woman. (*Savagely.*) Been laughing a long while now, that woman. Going to cry for a change. But they're all deaf—their ears are stopped with laughing.

SHOWMAN (*taken aback*). Well, I never! You wouldn't think that chap could string ten words together, and here he is tub-thumping with the best of them. What's wrong with me? What have I done? Solid business man like me. Backbone of the country. (*Jovially.*)

Can't take you seriously, though. You're tipsy. Have it out with you to-morrow. Hustle along, have a good time and get a move on. Otherwise you'll find yourself stranded. Man with your gifts! So long—you old hit of the season, you. See you to-morrow.

(SHOWMAN *goes off.*)

HINKEMANN (*alone*). To-morrow—he says: to-morrow—just as if there had to be a to-morrow. I see. At last, I see. Oh! light—my eyes—my poor eyes. . . .

(HINKEMANN *breaks down completely. From now on the Scene becomes a nightmare pressing upon his disordered mind. The figures crowd in upon him as in a dream, and are reabsorbed by the surrounding darkness.*)

(*One-armed and one-legged veterans of the war with barrel-organs advance concentrically upon* HINKEMANN, *nonchalantly singing:*)

" They put us in the army and they handed us a pack,
They took away our nice new clothes and dressed us up in kakh,
They marched us twenty miles and more to fit us for the war." . . .

(*They suddenly stand still. One after another they shout at each other.*)

It's *my* beat!

(*No one gives way to the others. They all shout together:*)

My beat!

(*There is a moment of silence. Since no one gives way they all sit down suddenly as at a word of command and begin to sing and turn their barrel organs. Presently they get up and march against each other as if they were storming a barricade.*)

(*Filled with revolutionary ardour and wildly turning their barrel organs they begin to sing:*)

" To hell with the Kaiser,
To hell with the Czar,
To hell with Lloyd George,
And also G. R."

(*The barrel organs crash together. The men recoil and return to the assault. Military police come running up and shout:*)

Law and order! Your King and Country need you! Right about—turn!

(*Sudden silence. The sound of these familiar words quiets the veterans. They turn about as at the word of command and march around the stage, each in his own separate orbit, turning their barrel organs and singing:*)

" It's a long way to Tipperary," etc. etc.

(*Newspaper boys run across the stage.*)

First Boy. Late night final! Sensational news! New night-club opened. Stomach dances. Jazz. Champagne. American bar.

Second Boy. Late night final! Latest sensation. Jews massacred in Galicia. Synagogue burnt down. A thousand burnt to death.

Voice. Cheers! Down with the Jews.

Third Boy. Late night final! Trixie Try. Beautiful film star features in drama of crime: "The Passionate Murderess." Sensational. Brutal. Stirs the senses.

Fourth Boy. Late night final! Plague in Finland. Outbreak of mob violence. Government sending troops.

Fifth Boy. Late night final! Stirring film drama: The Passion of our Lord. Two million-dollar production. Preceded by Dempsey-Carpentier fight.

Sixth Boy. Late night final. Greatest discovery of the Twentieth Century. Record-breaking poison-gas. Inventor given honorary degree. Pope confers title on inventor.

All Six Boys (*together*). Late night final!

(*Two old Polish Jews cross the stage.*)

First Jew. It's the old story. They flogged us. They dragged us out of bed in the black darkness. They took our women and girls. The hand of God has smitten us.

Second Jew. Smitten us is right. Call us the Chosen People. Chosen for the good God's whipping-boy.

(*They go off.*)

A little Love-Machine. He was so sweet—nothing but a kid—so I stayed all night—he hadn't more than a couple of bob to give me.

Her Bully. I'll push in your face next time you start acting soppy—going with a man for love!

Love-Machine. Give us a chance! I'm ill, you know. . . .

(*They go off.*)

Old Woman Selling Cakes. The second coming of my Saviour is at hand. Do not deny my Saviour, sir. All my hope is in Him, and the Kingdom of Heaven is near.

Buyers. And eats up all your savings!

Old Woman. Who cares for filthy lucre, sir. An old wreck like me can't be worse off. The trials of this world don't trouble me. I've drunk the dregs of them and my soul is thirsting for deliverance. I know that my Redeemer liveth.

(*They go off.* Street Vendor *approaches a young man with stiff collar and monocle.*)

Vendor. Latest remedy for weak men: Cantharoids.

Monocle. I always use Damianox.

VENDOR. That's not made any more. Proved unprofitable. All flavour, no nourishment. We're selling it for boot polish.

(*They go off.*)

CRIES. A man taken ill!
Had a stroke!
Police!

VOICES. That's that Robot from the fair. Comes of drinking all that blood. No wonder!

MAN WITH A TRUNCHEON. One of those bloody reds, I expect. Lazy swine. We'd have made short work of him in Ireland. Put a gun in his hand and make the blighter blow his own head off. Or bash it in for him. At the word of command: fall in and salute the flag. Those rotters have got to come to heel. Need a touch of the whip.

MAN WITH A FLAME-THROWER. Great mistake to take prisoners. Our orders were: take him round the corner, kick his bottom to make him jump, and pot him in the back. "Prisoner shot while attempting to escape."

(*Street-walkers come running from all directions.*)

FIRST PROSTITUTE. Robot can sleep with me. Take him to my place. I'll give him a glass of wine to set him up.

SECOND PROSTITUTE. No, take him to my place.

THIRD PROSTITUTE. To mine. To mine.

FOURTH PROSTITUTE. You old tart, you. Of all people! Haven't even got your discharge from hospital. Be off with you.

(THIRD *and* FOURTH PROSTITUTES *begin fighting. Military music in the next street. Drums and fifes. Then brass and drums.*)

(*Screeching.*) Soldiers! Soldiers! Hip, hip, hurrah!

(*Everyone leaves* HINKEMANN *and rushes off. The street is empty. The street lamps darken at the sound of the band—which recedes slowly.* HINKEMANN *gets up.*)

HINKEMANN. Infinite skies above me . . .
Everlasting stars. . . .

(*The stage darkens.*)

SCENE II

Indicates GENE'S *Home.* MAX KNATSCH *stands by the table waiting.* EUGENE HINKEMANN *comes in carrying a small parcel. His eyes shine feverishly and his movements are swifter and freer than in the earlier scenes.*

MAX. I've been waiting to tell you, Gene—the reason——

GENE. No need to give me reasons, Mister Knatsch; I've no use for reasons. I've gone further than that. Do you know what this is?

MAX. How should I know?

GENE. The Fact. Not reasons. Fact. I looked into a shop window. I could hardly believe my eyes. Didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Thought I must be dreaming. But no, there it was; in the window. I went in and asked why they put it there. That's an image of Priapus, the salesman said. The ancient Greeks and Romans, he said, worshipped him as a god. The women? I said. Men and women both, he said. I asked if it was for sale. Yes. By instalments? They didn't do business like that, he said. Beg pardon, I said, a working man is so used to it. So I left my watch and took the image.

(GENE *takes the little bronze image out of its wrappings and puts it on the mantelpiece. Lights a candle beside it.*)

MAX (*coaxing him*). You aren't feeling well, Gene—I can see you're not yourself.

GENE. Quite well.

MAX. You know I think I'll stay till your wife comes in.

GENE. Two's company, three's none.

MAX. How do you mean?

GENE. Just a moment. Did you ever see people walking along the street?

MAX. Funny questions you do ask.

GENE. You go along the streets, day after day, like a blind man. And then, all of a sudden, you *see*. Souls. Do you know what souls look like? Not like living creatures. One's a ghost, another's a machine, the third's a cash register, the fourth a brass-hat. . . . I say, did you ever put out the eyes of a goldfinch? (*Without waiting for an answer.*) The sins of the mothers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. That's what the Book says, doesn't it? Good night, Max. No offence—I know—you had your reasons. But I know the reason.

MAX. I'd better stay.

GENE. Go, go. Maggie's just coming. All that I said in the pub—it was only because I'd had a couple.

MAX. Oh, well—good night then, Gene.

GENE. Good night, Max. . . . Just a moment. How long have you been married?

MAX. Twenty-three years.

GENE. There was a time when you were thinking of getting a divorce, weren't you?

MAX. I did once. But we got kind of used to each other. There were the children, too.

GENE. Yes, of course, children. . . . Divorce is what they call "separation from bed and board," isn't it?

MAX. That's what they call it.

GENE. And your wife's religious, isn't she?

MAX. Never misses church on Sunday. What's a man to do about it? As far as I'm concerned, let her go it if it amuses her. . . . (*at the door*). Good night, Gene.

(MAX KNATSCH *goes out.* GENE *alone.*)

GENE (*to the image*). They have none other gods but thee. It's all lies and fooling when they pray to the Crucified. They only pray to thee. All their Hail-Marys rise to thee, all their Our-Fathers make a ring of roses round thy nakedness; and their processions are nothing but a dance to honour thee. Thou art no hypocrite, thou dost not hide thyself in lying words. Thou art Alpha and Omega, the first thing and the last. Thou art the truth, thou art the god of all. . . . Thou hast cast off thy servant, O my god, but thy servant builds thee an altar. . . . I do believe he's laughing. Go on, laugh, that's right, laugh! They laughed at me and had no cause to laugh. But *you* may laugh, *you* have a right to laugh at me for ever and ever, amen. (*Noise on the stairs.*) That's Maggie . . . dark night is coming and my eyes are going blind.

(*Old* MRS. HINKEMANN *comes in.*)

MRS. HINKEMANN. Good evening.

GENE. Oh—you! Good evening, mother. What are you doing here at this time of night? When did you start going out in the evening? Is it because the night's so fine and warm? The birds were flying low. We shall have thunder soon.

MRS. HINKEMANN. He's come back.

GENE. Who has?

MRS. HINKEMANN. Father.

GENE. Whose father?

MRS. HINKEMANN. Your father.

GENE. Mother, what are you talking about? My father died when I was six months old. You've told me that again and again.

MRS. HINKEMANN. I told you lies. But he *was* dead—dead to me. It happened when you were only six months old. You weren't weaned yet. One night he came home the worse for drink. Arm in arm with a woman he'd picked up in the street. He shouted at me. "Be off," he said, "go and sleep with the old people. I want something a bit livelier alongside of me. I've no use for you since you had that brat." I couldn't believe my own eyes. There he stood—not my own husband, but a beast, a wild beast, coming to tear me to pieces and take away my child. I took a carving-knife to him. But he just laughed at me and went off with his woman. He didn't come back that night, or the next. He just went off and left me as if we'd never met. So I went on the streets to earn money for you. I wasn't so bad-looking in those days. And to-day——

GENE. To-day?

MRS. HINKEMANN. He came back. In rags and tatters, rotten and

lousy with dirt. He was on his last legs when he felt his way into the room. I knew his step on the stairs. "What are you coming here for after twenty-nine years?" I said. He mumbled like an idiot—the nasty old man. "Don't hit me," he said. And then: "I've come back home to die."

GENE. And what did you say to him, mother?

MRS. HINKEMANN. I told him to undress and go to bed. There were clean clothes in the drawers and hot water on the stove and soap on the sink.

GENE. Then you've forgiven him?

MRS. HINKEMANN (*harshly*). I'll never forgive him. I'll look after him till he dies. That's nothing but my duty. When he dies, I'll close his eyes—no stranger shall do that for him. But when they come, and carry him away in his coffin to the cemetery, then I shall draw the blinds and lock the door and I shan't follow him to his grave. (*Triumphantly.*) Strangers shall bury him. That'll be my revenge for what he's done to me.

GENE (*after a moment*). What was it that hurt most, mother. Going short of food while he spent his wages at the pub?

MRS. HINKEMANN. No.

GENE. Bringing home that woman off the streets?

MRS. HINKEMANN. No.

GENE. Was it because he laughed at you. When you were struggling with your pain?

MRS. HINKEMANN. Yes, Gene, that was the worst thing of all.

GENE. You're right, mother. I'll have nothing to do with him and I won't follow him to his grave either.

(*Silence.*)

MRS. HINKEMANN. Gene, I've got to have a suit of clothes for your father.

GENE. Here, you can have my Sunday suit for him.

(*Takes suit from cupboard and gives it to* MRS. HINKEMANN.)

MRS. HINKEMANN. That'll fit him. . . . You know, father was always very particular about his clothes. . . . Is Maggie in?

GENE. She'll soon be back. . . . Mother, you've got your troubles to bear and I've got mine. Only you can tell about yours—but I don't dare say a word for fear they'd laugh at me.

MRS. HINKEMANN. We all have to bear our troubles. No one gets let off. Life's too strong for us, Gene. I must be getting back. Father'll be getting hungry. Good night.

GENE. Good night, mother.

(MRS. HINKEMANN *goes out.*)

That was the worst of all—laughing at her when she was raw with pain. Didst thou hear it, thou great god? Are thou content with the burnt sacrifices of thy servants? Father the whore's champion. Wife the

little chuckling love bird, billing and cooing for thee. Shall we dance before thee? Drink rat's blood for a threepenny entrance and dance for two human lives.

(GENE *begins to dance, rhythmically hopping from one leg to the other, his arms swinging loose, at first slowly, but soon with a wild and rapid rhythm.*)

Hop, skip and jump—hurrah.
Walk up, ladies and gents.
Cash at the door—hurrah.
The more the merrier—hip, hip, hip.

(*He breaks into hysterical laughter and drops on to a footstool. After a moment* FANNY *comes in.*)

FANNY. Good evening. Maggie not in?

GENE. No.

FANNY. You don't half look blue, sitting there. Such a wonderful night out—warm as anything. I'm going dancing. Care to come along?

GENE. Oh! it's you—sorry, I was dreaming.

FANNY. I say, Gene——

GENE. Yes.

FANNY. I say, Gene——

GENE. Well?

FANNY. You're still a fine upstanding young fellow, the best looking of the lot——

GENE. Well?

FANNY. Well, I mean to say——

GENE. Yes?

FANNY. When you come to think of it—Maggie's always in a tantrum nowadays—of course I wouldn't say a thing against any friend of mine, but between ourselves, I don't envy you. (*Comes close to* GENE.) I say, Gene—what about it? Come along. You can tell Maggie you went to a branch meeting; you can say—oh well, you know what I mean.

GENE. Do you mean—I'm to stay with you to-night? That what you're driving at? It's so fine and warm to-night. You can't walk a step without falling over a couple of cats. In the park——

FANNY. It's warm enough to sleep on a bench in the park. I say, Gene——

(FANNY *cuddles up to* GENE *and kisses him.* GENE *shakes her off and gives a shout of laughter.*)

(*Furiously.*) Do you think I'd run after you?

GENE. Run after yourself, my dear. Plenty of men running around in the park. Tom-cats, she-cats, dogs and bitches. It's the heat.

FANNY (*raging*). Next time you can whistle for me.

(*Runs out.*)

GENE (*laughs*). Hinkemann is dead. Hinkemann is risen again on the third day and ascended into heaven. There's a naked idol in the market-place. They buzz round him like flies after honey. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen. Sensational revelations! . . . *Me*—a lawful ground for divorce!

(*A few moments' silence.* MAGGIE *comes in.*)

MAGGIE. Good evening, Gene.

GENE (*without looking up*). And the Lord said to Cain: Where is thy brother Abel? And he answered: Am I my brother's keeper?

MAGGIE. It's me, Gene.

GENE. But the Lord said: "Thy brother's blood cries to heaven for vengeance."

MAGGIE. I've brought you some flowers, Gene. It's our wedding anniversary.

GENE. Some people have the face to laugh at you and come wheedling you in the same breath. Thanks, Maggie. It's kind of you. They're asters, aren't they? Does you good to look at the colours. Our wedding day was lovely, wasn't it—and our wedding night—it *was* lovely.

MAGGIE. It was peace then.

GENE. And then came the war. You said: "I'm proud of you, proud that you're in the Guards." And when we left for the front, you cried. Were you crying for joy because I was in the Guards?

MAGGIE. We had so much to look forward to.

GENE. Yes, the future looked like a bed of roses. But you know, at the front, when a shell dropped on a flower-bed it wiped out the flowers. Plants and animals—animals and people—it's all the same thing. I was a cheery young fellow and didn't think twice about it. You used to be jealous in those days.

MAGGIE. Yes.

GENE (*harshly*). You don't need to be jealous any more now. Now, you can—laugh at me.

(MAGGIE *begins to cry.*)

That's right, laugh away! Crying? Stop your play-acting, woman; laugh, laugh! You're learnt how to laugh. You laugh to see a man lay his skinned soul naked in the filth of the street. Stop your crying. Or must I sing to you? (*Sings shrilly the opening of the Merry Widow waltz.*) Why don't you laugh? (*Exhausted.*) I pressed the button, didn't I?

MAGGIE (*warding him off with outspread palms*). My God, how you look at me—I'm frightened of you.

GENE. Frightened? Not you! Frightened of me when I'm not—not even——

MAGGIE (*quickly—humbly*). No, I'm not frightened. Indeed, I'm, not. I love you, how could I be frightened?

GENE. Tell me the truth, woman.

MAGGIE. I will.

GENE. I know all about you.

MAGGIE. I've been a bad woman, Gene.

GENE. You're not telling lies, now?

MAGGIE. I was bad. I'm only a woman, after all. It came over me all of a sudden. I loved you, and at the same time—I didn't love you. It was wicked of me. I don't know if you can ever care for me again?

GENE. I can't blame you for going with Paul. You had a right to do that, if you loved him.

MAGGIE (*uncomprehending*). Then you don't love me?

GENE. It's just *because* I love you.

MAGGIE (*uncomprehending*). No—no——

GENE. But you must go away, Maggie. At once. Or, no—I'll go. I'm not making any claims. The furniture is yours. Good-bye.

MAGGIE. O Gene, O Gene—my dear, my poor, poor dear. I have betrayed you for thirty pieces of silver. I have been a bad woman.

GENE. Oh! you woman, you! Who taught you to tell lies these last few weeks? Or have I been deaf all along? Not knowing what was going on in my own home? Everything has turned upside down. Butterflies turn into worms—a worm with eyes, a lying worm, wheedling me like a whore that has her living to get. (*Raging.*) Let go my hands. Don't dare to touch me. My crippled body made you sick, but now, now *you* make *me* sick. Your hands—toads, slimy toads. Your breasts, your little round firm breasts—a heap of filth. Your mouth, your sweet red mouth—a stinking cesspool. Your whole body, your strong, healthy, flowering body—I loathe the sight of it—rotting in the midst of health. Nothing but a carcass turning to corruption before my eyes.

MAGGIE (*on her knees*). Scold me, yes, scold me. Beat me—beat me! I deserve it.

GENE. Going to the fair and seeing your husband put on show like a wild beast—your husband sucking the blood of wretched little animals—standing there with your lover and laughing—laughing!

MAGGIE. That's not true. Before God, that's not true.

GENE. I can't bear to talk to you. You're lying. You're lying—not like a human being but like a devil. Good-bye.

(GENE *turns to go.*)

MAGGIE. Say what you like to me, Gene, but stay with me. I take all the blame on myself. Yes, I laughed at the fair—I laughed like this. (*Laughs.*)

GENE. You deserve to die for that. Not because you had a lover—you had a right to. Not for lying to me—you thought you had a right to. But because you laughed at me—you must die. A mother may strangle her child, and no one have the right to cast a stone at her. But if she laughed while it was choking and mocked its face as it turned black for want of breath—then she should burn in hell to all

eternity. I'll let you off lightly, you, woman; I won't leave you to everlasting torment. Why are you kneeling to me? Kneel to *him.* He is your god. Pray to him—pray!

(*Drags her to the image of Priapus. His breathing has turned to groaning.*)

(*After a moment.*) What—what are you staring at? What's in your eyes? *That's* no lie—I'll take my oath there's no lie in your eyes. I've known your eyes so long now. I saw them first at the works—and then in barracks—and in hospital—and in prison. The same eyes everywhere. The eyes of hunted, beaten, tormented, broken creatures. . . . Maggie, I thought you had everything, and now—you're just as miserable and helpless as I am. . . . Well, if that's the way it is—then I suppose we must be brother and sister to each other. I am you and you are I. . . . And what's to become of us?

MAGGIE. I will never leave you again.

GENE. That's not what I mean, Maggie. That's all over and done with. What does it matter to us? What does it matter if you go with someone else, or tell me lies, or laugh at me? It won't help you. Even if you were to go in silks and satins and live in a grand house and never stop laughing—all the same you'd be nothing but a poor unhappy creature just like me. I see that now—I see. . . . Leave me alone, Maggie.

MAGGIE. Leave you alone, now?

GENE. There's no help for it. You've got to leave me alone. I've got to leave you alone.

MAGGIE. What's to become of us?

GENE. You know, once, about six years ago, when I was in a bad way—I hadn't had enough to eat for weeks—my mouth used to water whenever I saw anyone taking a bite of food. In the park I'd see rich people's children eat their morning sandwiches. And to see some kid putting his teeth into a bit of bread and butter—it was frightful the way I felt. I forgot about being hungry. I was wild with the kid. I couldn't bear to see him. I could have murdered him just to make him stop eating.

MAGGIE. What do you mean, Gene? I don't see what that has to do with it.

GENE. It's my own fault that people laugh at me. I ought to have looked out for myself when the big pots and the brass hats started this wickedness that has smashed up the earth. I'm fit to laugh at, yes, and so is everything else in our times—as miserable and ridiculous as I am. The world has lost its soul and I have lost my sex. What's the difference. Let's go our ways. You yours. I mine.

MAGGIE. What *do* you mean by all this, Gene?

GENE. Just this: I've seen and understood; but I don't know how long it'll last. A man's nature is stronger than his thoughts. His thoughts are ways of fooling himself.

MAGGIE. But what's to become of me?

GENE. You're strong and healthy. There's no place for a cripple

in this world where no one's any good that can't make good. Either he's healthy and then his soul is healthy, or he's not right in his mind and ought to be put away. That's what healthy, sensible people say. It's not really true ; but it's not really lies either. A cripple is good for nothing—his mainspring's broken, useless, like the wings of those eagles in the Zoo when their tendons are cut. Good-bye, Maggie ; I wish you a happy life.

MAGGIE. Gene, what are you going to do ? You won't leave me alone ?

GENE. It's not because of my illness, not because I'm smashed up. . . . But, you see, I walked along the street and there were no people —nothing but grinning faces, rows and rows of horrible grinning faces. And I came home and there were more faces—and then, just wretchedness, senseless, endless wretchedness of blinded creatures. I haven't the strength to go on. I haven't the strength to fight or the strength to believe. A man who has no strength for dreams has lost the strength to live. That bullet was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. All that I see, I understand ; all that I understand, hurts me. Living is only being hurt and wanting to go on. . . . *I won't go on.*

MAGGIE. You wouldn't do yourself in ? Gene—O Gene, I didn't laugh at you—I swear I didn't laugh. Listen, Gene darling, I'm going to stay with you. For ever and ever. It'll all come right again. You and me. We'll keep each other warm. You and me. Me and you.

GENE. You didn't laugh—look at me, Maggie—I believe you, Maggie—darling. (*Kisses her tenderly.*) It'll all come right again—you and me. Me and you.

MAGGIE (*clings to him*). It'll be summer and quiet in the fields. There will be stars and walking hand in hand.

GENE (*tears himself away*). It'll be autumn and the leaves falling. Cold stars—and hate—and fist against fist.

MAGGIE (*screams*). Gene !

GENE (*wearily*). I know too much.

MAGGIE (*crying helplessly like a child*). Don't leave me alone. I'm lost in the dark. I'll hurt myself. Oh, how it hurts, how it hurts. I'm so frightened to be alone. Think, Gene, think—all alone in the world. And nothing but wild beasts everywhere. No one to be good to you. Everyone tearing and biting and scratching. Don't leave me ! Don't leave me ! Whom God hath joined—I belong to you.

GENE. What's against nature can't be God's will. Try, Maggie, try to fight your way out. There's nothing wrong with you. Start all over again. Start fighting for a better world—a world that's made for the like of us.

MAGGIE (*hopelessly shrugging her shoulders*). Even if I wanted to I shouldn't know how. I haven't the fight left in me. I'm all in bits. (*Desperately.*) O God, I'll never find my way. We're caught in a trap, Gene, that's what it is. A spider's got hold of us and won't let go. We're all tied up and tangled and can't move a step. I don't understand what life's about. O dear Lord Jesus, deliver us from evil !

(*Goes out heavily.*)

GENE (*alone*). Alpha and Omega, first and last. Who can find any first or last in a spider's web? (*Throws the image of Priapus on to the fire.*) You lying god. You wretched devil, you. (*After a moment.*) If that's the truth, who's got the right to judge his neighbour? We're all condemned to judge ourselves. . . .

Deliver us. Deliver us. In all the streets of all the towns of all the world they cry: Deliver us. The Frenchy that fired off my bullet —or the nigger maybe—he's crying out just the same: Deliver us. I wonder if he's alive and how he likes it? Of all the halt and the maimed and the blind, which is he? He did me in, and another fellow did him in. But who did us all in? All of us: one soul in one body.

To think there's people in the world that don't see that. And people who've forgotten it!

The war came and took them and they hated their chiefs and obeyed orders and killed each other. And it's all forgotten. They'll be taken again and hate their bosses again and obey orders again and—kill each other. Again and again. That's what people are. They might be different if they wanted to. But they don't want to. They mock at life. They scourge and spit upon and crucify life.

Again and again and for ever.

There's no sense in it. Making themselves poor when they might be rich and not need to pray for the kingdom of heaven. The blind and the blinded. Just as if they'd *got* to. Blindman's buff. Round and round—for thousands and thousands of years. As if there was no help for it. As if it had *got* to be. Ships caught in the current, smashing each other to bits.

(*Noise of voices outside. The door is thrown open. A crowd of people presses into the room; led by* MAX KNATSCH.)

MAX. In the yard—in the yard—in the yard—you wife—threw herself down—don't look—don't look at her—don't—it's—terrible.

(*The body of* MAGGIE, *wrapped in a sheet, is carried in.*)

GENE (*his eyes glazed, moving mechanically*). Leave me alone. Leave me alone. Leave me alone with my wife. . . . (*Beseeching.*) Please.

(*They leave the room.*)

She was strong and sound. And she broke the net. And here I stand —here I stand—monstrous—ridiculous. In all ages there'll be men like me. But why me? Why should it fall on me? It doesn't pick and choose. It hits this man and that man. And the next and the next go free. What can we know about it? Where from? Where to? Any day the kingdom of heaven may arise, any night the great flood may come and swallow up the earth.

(*The stage closes.*)

HOPPLA! SUCH IS LIFE!

A Play in a Prologue and Five Acts. English version by HERMON OULD

Translator's Note

I wish to thank my friend Hilda Jordan for her inestimable help in the making of this translation.

H. O.

Note to Producer

All the scenes of the play can be played on a scaffolding divided into several floors ; the necessary changes can be made without changing the structure. In theatres where a cinematographic apparatus is impracticable the film interludes may be left out or simple lantern-pictures substituted. In order to preserve the tempo of the play, there should be only one interval, after Act II.

CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE

KARL THOMAS
EVA BERG
WILHELM KILMAN
ALBERT KROLL
MRS. MELLER
SIXTH PRISONER
RAND (a Warder)
LIEUTENANT BARON FRIEDRICH
SOLDIERS

Period, 1919

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

KARL THOMAS
EVA BERG
WILHELM KILMAN
MRS. KILMAN
LOTTE KILMAN
ALBERT KROLL
MRS. MELLER
RAND (a Warder)
PROFESSOR LÜDIN
BARON FRIEDRICH
COUNT LANDE
WAR MINISTER
FINANCIER
HIS SON
PICKEL
SERVANT AT MINISTRY
WARDER IN ASYLUM
STUDENT
PRESIDENT OF BRAIN-WORKERS' UNION
PHILOSOPHER X
CRITIC Z
ELECTOR
OLD WOMAN
PRISONER N
JOURNALISTS
FRITZ
GRETE
FIRST WORKMAN
SECOND WORKMAN
THIRD WORKMAN
FOURTH WORKMAN
FIFTH WORKMAN
REMAND OFFICER
HEAD-WAITER
PORTER
WIRELESS OPERATOR
PAGE-BOY
CLERK
INN-KEEPER
CHIEF OF POLICE
FIRST POLICE OFFICER
SECOND POLICE OFFICER
THIRD POLICE OFFICER
POET Y
ELECTION OFFICER
SECOND ELECTION OFFICER
FIRST VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR
SECOND VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR
THIRD VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR
LADIES. GENTLEMEN. PEOPLE

The action of the play passes in many countries eight years after the suppression of a rebellion. Period, 1927.

HOPPLA! SUCH IS LIFE!

CINEMATOGRAPHIC PRELUDE

NOISES: ALARUM-BELLS

FLASHES OF LIGHT

SCENE SHOWING PEOPLE'S UPRISING

ITS SUPPRESSION

CHARACTERS OF THE PROLOGUE

HERE AND THERE

PROLOGUE

Large Prison Cell

Karl Thomas. This damned silence!

Albert Kroll. Would you like a choir?

Eva Berg. In the French Revolution the aristocrats danced a minuet on the way to the guillotine.

Albert Kroll. Romantic claptrap! They'd have done better to examine their underwear. It wouldn't have smelled of lavender.

(*Silence.*)

Wilhelm Kilman. Mother Meller, you're an old woman. You're always either silent or smiling . . . Aren't you at all afraid of . . . of . . . Mother Meller (*he edges towards her*), my legs tremble as if I had a fever and my heart feels as if it were being pressed by a band of ice. You see: I've got a wife and child. Mother Meller, I'm in such a funk . . .

Mrs. Meller. Be calm, my boy. It's only when one is young that it seems so bad. Later on feelings get blurred. Life and death are part of the same stream. You come out of one womb and you pass into another . . .

Wilhelm Kilman. Do you believe in life over there?

Mrs. Meller. No. Teachers knocked that belief out of me.

Wilhelm Kilman. Nobody visited you. Didn't you want them to?

Mrs. Meller. They took away my parents and both my boys in the war. It hurt, of course; but I thought to myself, Times will change—and they did. All lost . . . and there will be yet other battles . . .

(*Silence.*)

KARL THOMAS. Listen! I saw something.

EVA BERG. What?

KARL THOMAS. No! don't all crowd together. The goggle-eyes are spying. Let's escape.

ALBERT KROLL. Do you like the taste of bullets?

KARL THOMAS. Look at the window. The plaster round the iron is loose.

ALBERT KROLL. Is it?

KARL THOMAS. Hasn't the large piece of plaster been made firm?

ALBERT KROLL. It has.

KARL THOMAS. Do you see?

EVA BERG. Yes, yes. Just to madden us.

MRS. MELLER. Probably.

WILHELM KILMAN. They wanted to get at us once from outside, and they nearly succeeded, too . . . Oh, I don't know . . .

MRS. MELLER. What's up, white-liver?

WILHELM KILMAN. It's all very well, but . . .

KARL THOMAS. Who's putting in buts?

ALBERT KROLL. You know *I*'m not one to take things lightly. It's night. What's the time?

KARL THOMAS. It just struck four.

ALBERT KROLL. Then the guard has changed. We are on the first floor. If we stay here, we can say Good morning to one another in a common grave. If we try to escape we stand one chance in ten; and even if we only stood one chance in a hundred we ought to risk it.

WILHELM KILMAN. And if we didn't succeed . . .

KARL THOMAS. Dead in any case. Here. Albert, you do a parade march, six steps to and six steps from the window to the door. Then the spy-hole will be covered up every now and again and those outside won't notice anything. The fifth time I will jump up to the window, use all my strength to break the iron loose . . . and then Good-bye papa!

EVA BERG. I shall scream. Karl, I'll hug you to death!

ALBERT KROLL. Later on!

KARL THOMAS. Let her! She is so young.

ALBERT KROLL. First Karl jump out; Eva second; and then Wilhelm grab hold of Mrs. Meller, lift her up . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. Yes, yes: I only wanted to say . . .

MRS. MELLER. Let him go first. Nobody need help me. I'll take my chance with the rest of you.

ALBERT KROLL. Shut up. You come first, then Wilhelm, and I last.

WILHELM KILMAN. Suppose the flight doesn't come off? We'd better think it over . . .

ALBERT KROLL. If the flight doesn't come off . . .

KARL THOMAS. Does one ever know whether a flight comes off or not? One must make the attempt, comrade! A revolutionary who

doesn't dare . . . ! You ought to have stayed at home with your mother and not gone to the barricade.

WILHELM KILMAN. We should be lost. There'd be no hope then.

KARL THOMAS. To hell with hope! Hope of what? The death-sentence has been pronounced. For ten days we've been waiting for it to be carried out.

MRS. MELLER. Yesterday evening they asked for the address of our relatives.

KARL THOMAS. So where does hope come in? A discharge of shot, and if it misses, a finishing-shot thrown in. Happy victory, or happy death—the same old solution for thousands of years.

(WILHELM KILMAN *ducks.*)

Or . . . had you thought of whining for mercy? Swear at any rate that you'll keep silent.

WILHELM KILMAN. Why do you let him abuse me? Haven't I slaved night and day? For fifteen years I've worn myself out for the Party and now I must be allowed to say . . . *I* haven't been having my breakfast in bed.

MRS. MELLER. Peace, the pair of you!

KARL THOMAS. Think of the trial. Would the likes of them quash the death-sentence? If you strike a concrete wall, do you expect the same sound as from a bell?

ALBERT KROLL. Go ahead! Everybody ready? Eva, you count. Be careful, Karl—the fifth time, mind!

(ALBERT KROLL *begins to walk up and down from the window to the door from the door to the window. General tension.*)

EVA BERG. One—two—three . . .

(KARL THOMAS *slips to the window.*)

Four . . .

(*Noise at the door. Door creaks open.*)

ALBERT KROLL. Damn!

RAND (*a Warder*). Anybody want the chaplain?

MRS. MELLER. *He* ought to be ashamed of himself.

RAND. Don't add to your crime, old woman. Soon you'll be standing in the presence of your Maker.

MRS. MELLER. The worms don't distinguish one creed from another I'm told. Tell your chaplain that Jesus drove the money-changers out of the Temple with whips. Tell him to write that in his Bible, and on page one.

RAND (*to the* SIXTH PRISONER *who is lying on a bench*). And you?

SIXTH PRISONER (*softly*). Excuse me, comrades. I left the Church when I was sixteen. Now . . . in the presence of death . . . dreadful . . . You understand, comrades. Yes, I will go to the chaplain, sir.

WILHELM KILMAN. Call yourself a revolutionary? Stinkpot! Go to the chaplain! Dear God, make me good and let me go to heaven!

MRS. MELLER. Don't upset the poor devil.

ALBERT KROLL. Seeing that it's death . . . let him go.

WILHELM KILMAN. Can't a man say what he thinks?

(WARDER *and* SIXTH PRISONER *go out. Door closes.*)

ALBERT KROLL. I suppose he won't give us away?

KARL THOMAS. No.

ALBERT KROLL. I say! That chap's got to go with him, so he can't spy! Ready, Karl: I'll help you. Here, on my back!

(ALBERT *bends.* KARL *gets on to his bent back. As he stretches out both hands to grip the bars—*

Rattle of musketry. Splinters and other fragments fly into the cell. KARL THOMAS *jumps from* ALBERT KROLL'S *back. They all stand and stare at one another.*)

Are you wounded?

KARL THOMAS. No. What was it?

ALBERT KROLL. Nothing special. They are watching our window. A little Company.

EVA BERG. What does it mean?

MRS. MELLER. Prepare yourself, my child.

EVA BERG. For . . . death?

(*The others are silent.*)

No . . . no . . . (*Sobs, weeps*).

(MRS. MELLER *goes to her, strokes her.*)

ALBERT KROLL. Don't cry, little girl. I once heard someone say that we revolutionaries are all dead men on leave of absence.

KARL THOMAS. Leave her alone, Albert. She is young. Hardly seventeen. To her, death is a cold black hole in which she must lie for ever. And over her grave life goes on, warm, exciting, gay and sweet.

(KARL THOMAS *goes to* EVA BERG.)

Your hands . . .

EVA BERG. Dear . . .

KARL THOMAS. I love you dearly, Eva.

EVA BERG. Would they bury us together if we asked them?

KARL THOMAS. Perhaps.

(ALBERT KROLL *jumps up.*)

ALBERT KROLL. Damned torture! Why don't they come? I once read that cats torture mice because they smell so good while they're dying. They've got other refinements of torture for us. Why don't they come? Why don't the dirty dogs come?

KARL THOMAS. Why do we fight? What do we know about it all? For an idea, for justice, let's say. Nobody among us has ever dug deep enough in himself to face the ultimate reason, if there is such a thing as an ultimate reason.

ALBERT KROLL. I don't understand you. I've known that Society lives by the sweat of *our* brows ever since I was sixteen and was dragged out of bed at five o'clock in the morning to deliver hot rolls. And what ought to be done to put an end to the injustice, *that* I knew even before I knew how to add up.

KARL THOMAS. Look around you: what makes people rush to support an ideal, in times of revolution or war? One runs away from his wife because she makes life hell for him. Another can't get to grips with life and limps about until he finds a crutch which looks wonderful and makes him feel like a hero. A third thinks that in a twinkling he can change his skin which has become distasteful to him. A fourth is after adventure. Fewer and fewer do it out of inward necessity.

(*Noises. Door creaks open.* SIXTH PRISONER *enters. Silence.*)

SIXTH PRISONER. You don't think the worse of me, comrades? I'm not a convert, comrades; but . . . it makes one calmer . . .

KARL THOMAS. Judas!

SIXTH PRISONER. But, dear comrades . . .

ALBERT KROLL. Still nothing happens. Still waiting. Wouldn't I like a smoke! Has anybody a cigarette-end?

(*They search their pockets.*)

ALL. No.

KARL THOMAS. Wait . . . yes . . . I have a cigarette.

ALL. Give it here! Give it here!

ALBERT KROLL. Matches? No go!

WILHELM KILMAN. I have one.

ALBERT KROLL. We must share it, of course.

WILHELM KILMAN. Really?

EVA BERG. Please.

KARL THOMAS. Eva can have my share.

MRS. MELLER. Mine too.

EVA BERG. No: everybody one puff.

ALBERT KROLL. Good! Who'll have the first?

EVA BERG. Let's draw lots.

ALBERT KROLL (*tears handkerchief into strips*). The one who draws the smallest.

(*All draw.*)

Mrs. Meller first.

MRS. MELLER. All right. (*Smokes*). Now your turn. (*Gives cigarette to* WILHELM KILMAN).

WILHELM KILMAN. Let's hope nobody catches us.

ALBERT KROLL. What could they do to us? Four weeks' solitary by way of punishment! Hahaha!

(*They all smoke, each a single puff. They watch one another sharply.*)

Karl, don't you take two draws.

KARL THOMAS. Don't talk rot.

ALBERT KROLL. D'you call me a liar?

KARL THOMAS. Yes.

WILHELM KILMAN (*to* ALBERT KROLL). You sucked much longer than we did.

ALBERT KROLL. Hold your jaw, coward!

WILHELM KILMAN. He calls me a coward.

ALBERT KROLL. Where did you slink away to on the day when the big decision was made? Where were you hiding your carcass when we stormed the Town Hall with the enemy at our heels and a common grave in front of us? Where did you tuck yourself away?

WILHELM KILMAN. Didn't I address the people from the balcony of the Town Hall?

ALBERT KROLL. Yes, when we'd gained the day. Before then, neither for nor against! Then up you jump in a jiffy and hold out your hand for the prizes.

KARL THOMAS (*to* KROLL). You've no right to talk like that.

ALBERT KROLL. Oh, little bourgeois . . .

MRS. MELLER. What a lot! Quarrelling five minutes before you stand up against the wall . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. He calls me a coward! I was only fifteen years . . .

ALBERT KROLL (*aping him*). "Fifteen years . . ." Parson! Not much of a privilege to share the same grave with you!

EVA BERG. Phew!

KARL THOMAS. Phew, indeed!

ALBERT KROLL. Phew what? Go and lie down in the corner with your tart and give her a kid. Then it can crawl out in the grave and play with the worms.

(EVA BERG *cries out.* KARL THOMAS *springs at* ALBERT KROLL.)

SIXTH PRISONER (*jumping up*). Heavenly Father, is that Thy will?

(*As the two hold each other by the throat, Noises. Door creaks open. They release each other.*)

RAND (*Warder*). The Lieutenant is coming. You must get ready.

(*He goes.*)

(ALBERT KROLL *goes to* KARL THOMAS *and embraces him.*)

ALBERT KROLL. One doesn't know anything about oneself, Karl. That wasn't me just now, it wasn't me. Give me your hand, little Eva.

KARL THOMAS. For ten days we've been waiting for death. It has poisoned us.

(*Noises. Door creaks open. Enter* LIEUTENANT *and* SOLDIERS.)

LIEUT. BARON FRIEDRICH (*to* ALBERT KROLL). Stand up. In the name of the President. The death-sentence was pronounced according to law. As a sign of his clemency and as a gesture of conciliation, the President has repealed the death-sentence. The condemned are to be detained and are to be conducted to the internment camp at once. Wilhelm Kilman excepted.

(KARL THOMAS *roars with laughter.*)

EVA BERG. Don't laugh so horribly, Karl.
MRS. MELLER. It's for joy.
LIEUT. BARON FRIEDRICH. Don't laugh, man.
EVA BERG. Karl! Karl!
ALBERT KROLL. He's not laughing because he's amused.
MRS. MELLER. Look at him. It's overcome him.
LIEUT. BARON FRIEDRICH (*to Warder*). Take him to the doctor.

(KARL THOMAS *is led away.* EVA BERG *goes with him.*)

ALBERT KROLL (*to* KILMAN). Only you remain behind. Forgive me, Wilhelm. We shall not forget you.

MRS. MELLER (*going out, to* KROLL). Mercy. Who would have thought that those gentlemen would have felt so weak?

ALBERT KROLL. Bad sign. Who would have thought they could feel so strong?

(*All go out except* LIEUT. BARON FRIEDRICH *and* WILHELM KILMAN.)

LIEUT. BARON FRIEDRICH. The President has granted your petition. He believes you when you say that you found yourself among the agitators against your will. You are free.

WILHELM KILMAN. Thank you, sir.

CURTAIN

CINEMATOGRAPHIC INTERLUDE

Behind the scenes,

CHOIR (*swelling and diminishing*).

Happy New Year! Happy New Year!
Extra Special! Extra special!
Great sensation!
Extra special! Extra special!
Great sensation!

On the screen

SCENES FROM THE YEARS 1919–1927

Among them KARL THOMAS *walking backward and forward in a madhouse cell, wearing the uniform of the institution.*

1919

TREATY OF VERSAILLES

1920

STOCK EXCHANGE UNEASINESS IN NEW YORK

People go mad.

1921

FASCISM IN ITALY

1922

HUNGER IN VIENNA

People go mad.

1923

GERMAN INFLATION

People go mad.

1924

DEATH OF LENIN IN RUSSIA

Placard: Death of Luise Thomas.

1925

GANDHI IN INDIA

1926

FIGHTING IN CHINA

Conference of European leaders in Europe.

1927

Face of clock.

The hands move, first slowly, then more and more quickly.

Noises. Clocks.

ACT ONE

Scene I

Office of Lunatic Asylum

(Attendant *at cupboard.* Professor Lüdin *at barred window.*)

Attendant. One pair grey trousers. One pair woollen socks. Did you bring no underclothes?

Karl Thomas. I don't know.

Attendant. Oh! One black waistcoat. One black coat. One pair shoes. Hat missing.

Prof. Lüdin. And money?

Attendant. None, sir.

Prof. Lüdin. Relations?

Karl Thomas. I was informed to-day that my mother died three years ago.

Prof. Lüdin. It'll be difficult for you. Life is hard nowadays. You have to force your way. Don't despair. Things will work out all right.

Attendant. Released 8th May, 1927.

Karl Thomas. No!

Prof. Lüdin. Yes, yes!

Karl Thomas. 1927!

Prof. Lüdin. Eight little years with us. Clothed, fed, and cared for. Nothing lacking. You can be proud of yourself: yours has been a remarkable case.

Karl Thomas. As if extinguished . . . Yes, something I do remember . . .

Prof. Lüdin. What?

Karl Thomas. The edge of a wood. The brown columns of the trees stretching up towards the sky. Beech trees. The vibrating green of the wood. A thousand little suns. So delicate. I wanted to go inside, I longed to. I didn't succeed. The tree-trunks bent out angrily and flung me back like a rubber ball.

Prof. Lüdin. Hold on! Like a rubber ball. Interesting association. Consider a moment: your nervous system reflects the truth. The wood—the solitary cell. The tree-trunks—the padded walls, best quality rubber. Yes, I remember; once every year you began to rave. You had to be isolated. Always on the same day. A real clinical achievement, this!

Karl Thomas. On which day?

Prof. Lüdin. The day on which . . . but you know quite well.

KARL THOMAS. The day of the reprieve.

PROF. LÜDIN. You remember everything?

KARL THOMAS. Yes.

PROF. LÜDIN. Then you are cured.

KARL THOMAS. To wait even minutes for death would be . . . but ten days! Ten times twenty-four hours. Every hour sixty minutes. Every minute sixty seconds. Every second a murder. Murdered four hundred and forty times in one day. And the nights . . . ! I hated the reprieve. I hated the President. Only a scoundrel could act like that.

PROF. LÜDIN. Here, go slow! You have every reason to be thankful. And look here, we don't take strong language amiss in here; but out there they would give you another year's imprisonment for insulting the head of the State. Be reasonable. You must have had your bellyful of *that*.

KARL THOMAS. You have to talk like that because you're in with them.

PROF. LÜDIN. Let's bring this interview to an end. You needn't be depressed because you've been in an asylum. As a matter of fact, most people ought to be in one. If I were to examine a thousand, I should have to detain nine hundred and ninety-nine.

KARL THOMAS. Why don't you do it?

PROF. LÜDIN. The State has no interest in my doing so. On the contrary. With one little dash of madness men might become good citizens. With two dashes of madness they become social reformers . . . Now, don't do anything foolish. I only desire your good. Go to one of your friends.

KARL THOMAS. And where may *they* hang out?

PROF. LÜDIN. There were several of you together in the cell.

KARL THOMAS. Five. Only one of them wasn't reprieved. His name was Wilhelm Kilman.

PROF. LÜDIN. He not reprieved? Hahaha! He made a career for himself at top-speed. Wiser than you.

KARL THOMAS. I don't understand you.

PROF. LÜDIN. You'll soon understand. Just go to him. He could help you. If he wants to help you, that is. If he'll *know* you . . .

KARL THOMAS. He's still alive?

PROF. LÜDIN. You're in for a surprise. An excellent prescription for you! Medically, I've cured you. I'll leave him to cure you of crazy ideas. Go to the Ministry of the Interior and ask for Mr. Kilman. Good luck to you.

KARL THOMAS. Good morning, doctor. Good morning (*to* ATTENDANT). It smells so strong of lilac here . . . Of course . . . Spring. There in front of the window real beeches are growing, aren't they? Not padded walls.

(*He goes.*)

PROF. LÜDIN. Bad stock!

BLACK OUT

CINEMATOGRAPHIC INTERLUDE

CITY 1927
TRAMS
MOTOR-CARS
UNDERGROUND RAILWAY
AEROPLANE

Scene II

Two rooms visible : Minister's Antechamber ; Minister's Office. Both rooms are seen when the curtain goes up, but afterwards only the room in which the action takes place, the other remaining in darkness.

Office

Wilhelm Kilman. I sent for you.
Eva Berg. Yes.

Antechamber

Financier's Son. Will he receive you ? He hasn't sent for you.
Financier. Not receive me ! He wouldn't dare not to.
Financier's Son. We need the credit till the end of the month.
Financier. Why are you so dubious ?
Financier's Son. Because he rejected the offer twice before.
Financier. I put it too bluntly.

Office

Wilhelm Kilman. You are on the committee of the Woman Workers' Union ?
Eva Berg. Yes.
Wilhelm Kilman. You are engaged as Secretary in the Ministry of Finance.
Eva Berg. Yes.
Wilhelm Kilman. For the last two months your name has been mentioned in the police reports.
Eva Berg. I don't understand.
Wilhelm Kilman. You have been inciting the women at the Chemical Factories to demand overtime ?
Eva Berg. I only exercise those rights which the Constitution allows.
Wilhelm Kilman. The Constitution was planned for peaceful times.
Eva Berg. Aren't we living in them ?
Wilhelm Kilman. The State rarely knows peaceful times.

ANTECHAMBER

FINANCIER. Before the tariff is changed the matter must be settled. Two extra hours; that or nothing.

FINANCIER'S SON. The trades unions have decided to hold out for an eight-hour day.

FINANCIER. What's good enough for the State is good enough for the heavy industry.

FINANCIER'S SON. Half a million workmen will have to be locked out.

FINANCIER. What of it? Kill two birds with one stone. Longer hours and reduction of wages.

OFFICE

EVA BERG. I am against war. If I had the power, the factories would stop working. What are they making? Poison gas!

WILHELM KILMAN. Your personal opinion, which doesn't interest me. I don't like war either. Do you know this handbill? You are the author?

EVA BERG. Yes.

WILHELM KILMAN. You are going against your duty as a State employee.

EVA BERG. There was a time when you did the same.

WILHELM KILMAN. This is an official conversation.

EVA BERG. In the past you have . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. Keep to the present. It is my duty to maintain order. Dear Miss Berg, be reasonable. Do you want to break your head against a brick wall? The State's skull is always the harder. I don't want you to do anything wrong. We *need* the extra hours at the present moment. You are lacking in practical knowledge. It would be damned unpleasant for me to have to go against you. I remember you well from former times . . . But I should have to. Really. Be reasonable. Promise me that . . .

EVA BERG. I promise nothing.

ANTECHAMBER

PICKEL (*who from the opening of the scene has been walking restlessly up and down, stops in front of the* FINANCIER). Excuse me, sir . . . I'm a native of Holzhausen. Perhaps you gentlemen know Holzhausen? Though the building of the railway line won't be started until October. As a matter of fact the mail-coach satisfied me. We have a saying in Holzhausen . . .

(*The* FINANCIER *turns away.*)

I believe, though, that the railway . . .

(*As no one heeds him, he breaks off and continues to walk up and down.*)

OFFICE

WILHELM KILMAN. The State must protect itself. I was not compelled to send for you. I wanted to give you my advice. They won't be able to say that . . . You alone must bear the responsibility. I warn you. (*Gesture.*)

(EVA BERG *goes.*)

(*At telephone.*) Chemical Factory? Director! . . . Kilman . . . Oh! Works' meeting at twelve o'clock. 'Phone me the result . . . Thank you. (*Hangs up receiver.*)

(*The* WAR MINISTER *walks through the Antechamber.*)

WAR MINISTER. Ah, good morning. You here too?

FINANCIER. Yes, unfortunately. This beastly waiting . . . Allow me to introduce your Excellency to my son. His Excellency von Wandsring, Minister of War . . .

WAR MINISTER. Pleased to meet you. Delicate situation.

PICKEL (*turning to* WAR MINISTER). What I mean to say, your Excellency, is that although the enemy . . .

(*As the* WAR MINISTER *does not heed him, he breaks off, goes into the corner, rummages in his pocket and brings out an official decoration which he puts on hastily and with much pains.*)

FINANCIER. You'll soon manage it, your Excellency.

WAR MINISTER. Of course. But . . . it's no fun to me to shoot down people—people to whom we first gave drum-sticks and then forbade them to beat the drum! It's those Utopian advocates of Democracy and Freedom of the People who have upset things. We must have authority. The concentrated experience of thousands of years. That can't be disposed of with catchwords.

FINANCIER. But Democracy, of course within limits, wouldn't necessarily lead to control by the mob, and, on the other hand, it might serve as a safety-valve . . .

WAR MINISTER. Democracy . . . Bunkum! The people govern? Come, now! Better an honest dictatorship. Don't let us put up a pretence, my good sir. Do we meet at the Club to-morrow?

FINANCIER. With pleasure.

(WAR MINISTER *goes.* COUNT LANDE *follows him to the door.*)

COUNT LANDE. Your Excellency . . .

WAR MINISTER. Ah, Count Lande. Instructions given.

COUNT LANDE. Yes, your Excellency.

WAR MINISTER. Are things going all right with you?

COUNT LANDE. The forces are prepared.

WAR MINISTER. Not too hot-headed, Count. No foolishness. Settlements by violence are a thing of the past. Anything that may be necessary in the interest of the Fatherland can be attained by legal means.

COUNT LANDE. We count on you, your Excellency.

WAR MINISTER. You have all my sympathy, Count . . . but I warn you . . .

(WAR MINISTER *is going.*)

PICKEL (*with a soldierly air*). At your service, General.

(WAR MINISTER, *without noticing him, goes out.*)

FINANCIER. How long will Kilman hold out?

FINANCIER'S SON. Why don't you do the business through Wandsring?

FINANCIER. Kilman is in power to-day. Best to be on the safe side.

FINANCIER'S SON. He's out of date. You may as well fling your Kilman into the general bankruptcy of democracy. You have only to sniff the atmosphere of the industrial world! I'd advise you to put your money on a national dictator.

PICKEL (*turning to* COUNT LANDE). Could you tell me what the time is, sir?

COUNT LANDE. Fourteen minutes past twelve.

PICKEL. The clocks in the town are always fast. I expected that an interview with the Minister would be punctually at noon . . . though indeed the clocks in the country are always slow in consequence of which . . .

(*As the* COUNT *does not heed him, he breaks off and continues to walk up and down.*)

COUNT LANDE. How do you address Kilman?

BARON FRIEDRICH. As your Excellency, of course.

COUNT LANDE. So that his fellow-Excellencies may enjoy the flavour?

BARON FRIEDRICH. It's the same old story! Put a man in a private's uniform, he soon yearns for a corporal's stripe.

COUNT LANDE. And he leaves us here in the antechamber! Ten years ago I wouldn't have shaken hands with the likes of him unless I'd been wearing buckskin gloves!

BARON FRIEDRICH. Don't excite yourself. I can tell you something else. Eight years ago I almost had him put up against a wall and shot.

COUNT LANDE. That's frightfully interesting. Were *you* about at that time?

BARON FRIEDRICH. Not so fast. Don't let's talk about it.

COUNT LANDE. To think that he nevertheless put you in the Cabinet. Has you always about him. You must have got on his nerves.

BARON FRIEDRICH. Yes, indeed, I feared that. When he came into the Cabinet for the first time—into the great Court of Chancery—I made a fuss; but why rake up old stories now? One must work in with him in the ordinary affairs of the State, so as to be prepared when times change again. He looked at me keenly. And from that day

one promotion followed another . . . ungraciously. But he never talked.

COUNT LANDE. A sort of hush-money?

BARON FRIEDRICH. Don't know. Let's talk of the weather. I suspect the chap of making use of first-class spies.

COUNT LANDE. These fellows have imitated us in everything.

PICKEL (*turns to* BARON FRIEDRICH). Indeed, a neighbour of mine in Holzhausen, you know, was of opinion . . . Pickel, he said, if you're to have an audience with the Prime Minister, he said, you must buy some white gloves. That was always the case with the old régime, he said, and it is just the same with the new. That's demanded by the Ceremonial Regulations, he said. But I, I thought to myself, if the Monarchy exacted white gloves, now that it's a republic we ought to put on black gloves . . . Just that! Because, you see, we're now free men and . . .

(*As* BARON FRIEDRICH *does not heed him, he breaks off and walks up and down.*)

BARON FRIEDRICH. He's a smart fellow, you must grant him that.

COUNT LANDE. Manners?

BARON FRIEDRICH. I don't know whether he took lessons from actors, as Napoleon did; in any case—gentleman from top to toe. Rides every morning, full riding-kit; faultless, I tell you.

COUNT LANDE. And through which crack emerges the smell of the proletarian?

BARON FRIEDRICH. Through every crack. He overdoes it slightly in every word, every gesture, every step. People think that if they have their clothes cut by a first-class tailor, that's all there is to it. What they don't notice is that a first-class tailor can only make a first-class job out of a first-class client.

COUNT LANDE. Nevertheless, I would take a job with the blighter's grandmother if she could help me to get out of the provinces into the town.

BARON FRIEDRICH. Said grandmother is not to be despised—she has an excellent *cuisine*.

COUNT LANDE. I've served long enough in gentlemen's houses.

OFFICE

SERVANT. Her Excellency and your daughter wish to see your Excellency. They are waiting in the drawing-room.

WILHELM KILMAN. Please tell them to be patient for ten minutes.

(SERVANT *goes.* *Telephone rings.*)

Hallo! You, my Lord? Yes: it's me. No. I'm doing nothing. No, really: you're not disturbing me. The fall of the Chemical Factory . . . Stage magic! Put-up job—obviously a put-up job. They're very cute over there. The State credit was agreed to yester-

day. What? Unanimous. Three per cents. Always at your service. Good morning, your Lordship.

(SERVANT *comes in.*)

SERVANT. The ladies say . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. They must wait. I have work to do.

ANTECHAMBER

BARON FRIEDRICH. Please . . . said the little daughter, and showed her knee.

COUNT LANDE. And the mother?

BARON FRIEDRICH. Thought that that was fine manners, turned red and said nothing.

COUNT LANDE. What a time he is! Governing doesn't come lightly to him.

(KARL THOMAS *comes in; sits in a corner.*)

OFFICE

(WILHELM KILMAN *rings.* SERVANT *comes in.*)

SERVANT. Your Excellency . . . ?

WILHELM KILMAN. Baron Friedrich and Count Lande . . .

(SERVANT *bows and goes out.*)

ANTECHAMBER

SERVANT (*to* COUNT LANDE *and* BARON FRIEDRICH). His Excellency will receive you.

FINANCIER. Excuse me, gentlemen. Give His Excellency this card. Only a minute.

(SERVANT *goes into Office.* FINANCIER *and* SON *follow him.*)

OFFICE

WILHELM KILMAN. Good morning. Good morning, gentlemen. Really to-day I'm not in a position to . . .

FINANCIER. Then it would be better if we waited till you were more at ease . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. Please . . .

FINANCIER. This evening at the Grand Hotel?

WILHELM KILMAN. Very well.

(FINANCIER *and* SON *go.*)

SERVANT (*to* COUNT LANDE *and* BARON FRIEDRICH). His Excellency begs you to . . .

(*He opens door into the Office.* LANDE *and* BARON FRIEDRICH *go in.* SERVANT *is about to go out through side door.*)

KARL THOMAS. Excuse me.

SERVANT. His Excellency is busy. I don't know whether His Excellency will receive anybody else.

KARL THOMAS. I don't want to speak to the Minister. I want Mr. Kilman.

SERVANT. Find somebody else to crack your jokes with.

KARL THOMAS. Jokes, comrade?

SERVANT. I'm not your comrade.

KARL THOMAS. Isn't Mr. Kilman the Minister's secretary? When I asked the porter for Mr. Kilman, he sent me here to the Minister's antechamber.

SERVANT. Have you come down from the moon? Do you mean to tell me you didn't know that the Minister's name was Kilman? Altogether you strike me as very suspicious. I'll send for the head of the Criminal Department.

KARL THOMAS. Aren't you talking about another Kilman? There are so many Kilmans.

SERVANT. What do you want?

KARL THOMAS. I want to speak to Mr. Wilhelm Kilman. Kilman. K-I-L-M-A-N.

SERVANT. That is how His Excellency spells his name.

(SERVANT *starts to go out.*)

KARL THOMAS. Kilman Minister?—No, stay here! I know the Minister, then. I am his friend. Yes, really, his friend. Eight years ago we were . . . just stay a minute . . . Have you a piece of paper? Pencil? I'll write my name down; the Minister will receive me at once.

(SERVANT *is undecided.*)

Go on!

SERVANT. One has to discriminate in these times.

(*He gives him paper and pen. Goes.* KARL THOMAS *writes.*)

PICKEL. Oh, really, indeed, a friend of the Minister . . . although, as a matter of fact, I . . . Pickel is my name. Oh, that boor of a servant! Indeed, one ought to take stronger measures against these officious toadies . . . but we Republicans put up with everything. I on the other hand understood the joke about your friend the Minister at once . . . Indeed, one ought to be allowed one's little joke at the Minister's expense. I mean to say, something ought to be done. In the Higher Administration, for instance, this servant . . . Yes, indeed that's a flaw in the Republic . . .

OFFICE

WILHELM KILMAN. One must know how to handle nations, gentlemen.

BARON FRIEDRICH. Your Excellency means to say that America has no interest in the war . . .

COUNT LANDE. Just consider France's peaceable attitude, your Excellency.

WILHELM KILMAN. Because the Ministers jabber about the peace of the world and make a parade of humanitarian ideas . . . But gentlemen . . . Just notice how often in every ministerial speech the words " peace of the world " and " humanitarian ideas " are mouthed, and I guarantee that just so many poison-gas factories and flying machine squadrons are provided for by the secret budget. Minister's speeches . . . gentlemen . . . !

BARON FRIEDRICH. It is said that Machiavelli is one of your Excellency's favourite authors.

WILHELM KILMAN. Why drag in Machiavelli ? Ordinary common sense !

(SERVANT *comes in.*)

SERVANT. May the ladies now . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. Show them in . . .

(*Enter* WIFE *and* DAUGHTER.)

You know Baron Friedrich——

BARON FRIEDRICH. Your Excellency . . . Miss Kilman . . .

MRS. KILMAN. But please don't always call me " Your Excellency." You know I don't like it.

WILHELM KILMAN. Count Lande. My wife. My daughter.

COUNT LANDE. Your Excellency . . . Miss Kilman . . .

BARON FRIEDRICH. Perhaps we are in the way.

MRS. KILMAN. No. As it happens, I wrote to you to invite you to come and see us on Sunday.

COUNT LANDE. Delighted.

MRS. KILMAN. Perhaps you will bring your friend with you ?

BARON FRIEDRICH. That is too kind of your Excellency.

LOTTE KILMAN (*softly to* BARON FRIEDRICH). You left me in the lurch yesterday.

BARON FRIEDRICH (*softly.*) But, darling . . .

LOTTE KILMAN. Your friend pleases me.

BARON FRIEDRICH. I congratulate him.

LOTTE KILMAN. I read your Registration papers.

BARON FRIEDRICH. When shall we meet ?

WILHELM KILMAN. Yes, Count, we must just deny it. Calumnies from the Left, I take no notice of. Calumnies from the Right—they are favoured with one of my answers. I know the sort of stuff the men of the old régime are made of. A man is but a man and has his weaknesses ; but even the most extreme Conservative could not accuse me of a lack of justice.

COUNT LANDE. But your Excellency, you are greatly appreciated in Nationalist circles.

WILHELM KILMAN. I will write to-day to the Head of your district. You take up your work in the Ministry in four weeks' time.

ANTECHAMBER

KARL THOMAS (*going backwards and forwards*). Minister . . . Minister . . .

OFFICE

(COUNT LANDE *and* BARON FRIEDRICH *take their leave.*)

ANTECHAMBER

BARON FRIEDRICH. What did I tell you?
COUNT LANDE. What a lot! What a lot!

(*Both go out.*)

KARL THOMAS. I've seen that face. Where?

(*Enter* SERVANT.)

Here is the letter for the Minister.

(SERVANT *takes letter into the Office.*)

SERVANT. A man, your Excellency.
WILHELM KILMAN. I don't want . . .

(KARL THOMAS *knocks on the door, and without waiting for an answer, goes in.*)

KARL THOMAS. Wilhelm! Wilhelm!
WILHELM KILMAN. Who are you?
KARL THOMAS. Don't you know me? All those years—eight years.
WILHELM KILMAN (*to* SERVANT). You can go.

(SERVANT *goes.*)

KARL THOMAS. You still living. Explain. We were pardoned. You were the only one that wasn't.
WILHELM KILMAN. An accident—a lucky accident.
KARL THOMAS. Eight years—walled in as in a grave. I told the doctor I remembered nothing. Oh, Wilhelm, often I saw you, in my lucid moments . . . often and often . . . I saw you dead. I pressed my nails into my eyes till the blood spurted . . . The warders thought I was having an attack.
WILHELM KILMAN. Yes . . . that time . . . I don't like to think of it.
KARL THOMAS. Death crouched there in the midst of us. Put us one against the other.
WILHELM KILMAN. What children we were!
KARL THOMAS. Hours like those in prison unite us like blood. That's why I came to you when I heard that you were still alive. You can count on me . . .
MRS. KILMAN. Wilhelm, we must go.

KARL THOMAS. Mrs. Kilman! Good morning, Mrs. Kilman. I didn't notice you. Are you his daughter? You have grown so tall!

LOTTE KILMAN. Everybody grows up at some time. My father has become Minister.

KARL THOMAS. Do you remember how you were allowed to visit your husband in the condemned cell? How unhappy you made me! You had to be dragged out. And your daughter stood at the door, with her hands in front of her face, and kept on saying "No—no—no!"

MRS. KILMAN. Yes, I remember. They were hard times. Weren't they, Wilhelm? Are things going well with you now? That's nice. Come and see us some time.

KARL THOMAS. Thank you, Mrs. Kilman.

(MRS. KILMAN *and* LOTTE *go.*)

Must she . . . must your daughter pose as a fine lady?

WILHELM KILMAN. What?

KARL THOMAS. Your so-called Ministerial office is just a dodge, isn't it? Just a daring piece of bluff? At one time comrades wouldn't have stood for such tactics. Will the whole machine soon be in our hands?

WILHELM KILMAN. You speak as if we were still in the middle of a revolution.

KARL THOMAS. What?

WILHELM KILMAN. Ten years have gone by since then. Just when the path seemed straight before us, relentless reality sent it askew. However, things do go forward.

KARL THOMAS. So you take your office seriously?

WILHELM KILMAN. Of course.

KARL THOMAS. And the people?

WILHELM KILMAN. I serve the people.

KARL THOMAS. Didn't you once assert that whoever occupied the Government benches, sitting cheek by jowl with his worst enemies, whether his intentions were good or ill, would give way in time?

WILHELM KILMAN. Life doesn't unwind itself according to theories. We learn by experience.

KARL THOMAS. If only they had put you against the wall!

WILHELM KILMAN. Still the hot-headed dreamer! But I won't take offence. We wish to govern democractically. What is Democracy? The will of the whole people. As Minister, I do not represent a party but the State. When one is responsible, my friend, one sees things differently. Power brings responsibility.

KARL THOMAS. Power! What's the use of you imagining you have power if the people have none? For five days I've been looking about me. Has anything changed? And you sit up there and conduct the humbug. Don't you realize that you have let down the Cause and are working against the people?

WILHELM KILMAN. It needs courage sometimes to work against

the people. More than going to the barricades. (*Telephone rings*). Excuse me. Kilman . . . unanimous decision not to work longer hours . . . Thank you, Director. Does the handbill give names? Oh . . . Take note that whoever leaves the works at five o'clock is discharged without notice. Good. The works will be closed for a few days. Negotiate with private firms. The Turkish order must be executed. (*Hangs up receiver. Rings again.*) Get on to the Police . . . Eva Berg's record. At once. Thank you. (*Hangs up receiver.*)

KARL THOMAS. What nerve! You've mastered the methods.

WILHELM KILMAN. Whoever is in charge here must see to it that the complicated machinery doesn't come to a standstill through being left in clumsy hands.

KARL THOMAS. Are the women still fighting for your old principles?

WILHELM KILMAN. Could I allow the workwomen of any factory whatever to dislocate the mechanism of the State?

KARL THOMAS. Your authority would suffer?

WILHELM KILMAN. Could I let myself down? Could I show myself less capable than the old régime? It isn't so easy sometimes . . . If one once wavered, then . . . There are times when . . . You folk imagine that . . . Oh, what do you know about it? . . .

KARL THOMAS. What do we know? You help the reactionaries to get the whip-hand.

WILHELM KILMAN. Nonsense! In a democracy I have to consider the rights of the employer as well as the rights of the employee. We haven't attained Utopia yet.

KARL THOMAS. Yes; but the other side has the press, money, weapons. And the workers? Empty hands!

WILHELM KILMAN. Oh, you always see an armed battle, head-breaking, wounding, shooting. To the barricades! To the barricades, O workers!—We've abandoned the notion of a battle of brute force. Without ceasing we've preached that our goal shall be attained with the help of moral and spiritual weapons only. Violence is always reactionary.

KARL THOMAS. Is that the opinion of the masses? I don't suppose you've sought their opinion.

WILHELM KILMAN. What are the masses? Could they do any real work in the old days? Nothing! Spout catch-phrases and smash things up! We should have slid into chaos. Every adventurer was jerked into a position of authority. People who never in their lives knew anything about the workers except as a subject for tap-room discussion. Let's be honest. We have saved the revolution . . . The mob is impotent, and for the present will remain impotent. They lack all specialist knowledge. How can a worker in times like these, without education, take over the leadership of a syndicate, for instance? Or the directorship of an electric power-station? Later on—in ten years—a hundred years—with education, with evolution, things will alter. To-day we must govern.

KARL THOMAS. And it was with you that I . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. No doubt you take me for a traitor?

KARL THOMAS. Yes.

WILHELM KILMAN. Ah, my friend, I'm used to that sort of charge. To you folk every bourgeois is a blackguard, a bloodsucker, a devil, or something of the sort. If you only grasped what the bourgeois world has achieved and what it will yet achieve!

KARL THOMAS. Steady on there! You twist my words. I have never denied that the bourgeois world has achieved a number of things. I've never maintained that the bourgeoisie was raven-black and the masses snow-white. But what has the world come to? Our ideal is the greater. If we can carry it through we shall have achieved more.

WILHELM KILMAN. It all depends on tactics, my friend. Your tactics would lead to the darkest reaction.

KARL THOMAS. I see no distinction.

WILHELM KILMAN. Have you all forgotten the weals which disfigured your backs? You're like children! To want the whole tree when you can have an apple from it.

KARL THOMAS. And who props you up? The old bureaucracy? And suppose I believed that your intentions were honourable, what are you after all? A powerless puppet! A rubber ball!

WILHELM KILMAN. What is it you really want? Just look at the inner workings of this place. How it all fits in! How smoothly the wheels go round. Everybody knows his job.

KARL THOMAS. Are you proud of that?

WILHELM KILMAN. Yes, I am proud of my staff.

KARL THOMAS. We speak different languages. You mentioned a name on the telephone just now.

WILHELM KILMAN. I was talking about matters of official importance.

KARL THOMAS. Eva Berg.

WILHELM KILMAN. Oh, her . . . She works in the Ministry of Finance. She's giving me a lot of trouble. What that bit of a girl has turned into!

KARL THOMAS. She must be twenty-five now.

WILHELM KILMAN. I wanted to spare her . . . But she simply runs into trouble . . . I must say good-bye. Here, take this. (*He offers* KARL THOMAS *money: it is rejected*). Sorry I can't offer you a position here. Go to the Trades Unions. Perhaps you will find old acquaintances there. I imagine you will . . . One is so busy: one loses contact. Hope all goes well with you. Don't do anything foolish. In our aims we are at one. It is only the choice of means . . .

(*He pushes* KARL THOMAS *gradually into the Antechamber.* WILHELM KILMAN *remains standing for a few moments. Gesture.*)

ANTECHAMBER

(KARL THOMAS *stares, dumb.*)

PICKEL (*to* SERVANT). Is it my turn now, Mr. Secretary?

SERVANT. Have you been announced?

PICKEL. It took me two days and a half to come here by train, Mr. Secretary. Remarkable things happen to one. Do you know Holzhausen?

SERVANT. Is the Minister aware of . . . ?

PICKEL. It's about the railway in Holzhausen.

SERVANT. I'll inquire.

(SERVANT *goes into Office.*)

PICKEL. No doubt the Minister is a very powerful man?

(KARL THOMAS *answers nothing.*)

When the good God makes somebody into a Minister I suppose it's something like this . . .

(*As* KARL THOMAS *does not answer,* PICKEL *breaks off, and walks up and down.*)

OFFICE

WILHELM KILMAN. Oh, all right. Show him in.

(SERVANT *opens door to Antechamber.*)

SERVANT. Mr. Pickel.

(*Enter* PICKEL.)

PICKEL. At your service, your Excellency. I've so much on my mind, your Excellency. Although, of course, you're bound to be very busy . . . nevertheless I won't rob you of your time, your Excellency. Pickel is my name. Born in Holzhausen, district of Waldwinkel. It's just on account of the railway which they want to lay through Holzhausen, your Excellency. You know, in October . . . indeed, we have a proverb in our parts: Jack would grease the belly of a fatted goose. Just such a fatted goose was Holzhausen. Steamers call three times a week; the mail-coach comes every day the good God sends. And for my part, I . . . but I won't bring myself into it . . . Your Excellency will know all about that. Nevertheless, this is certain, your Excellency did not know that if the railway went across my property . . . I'm not detaining your Excellency?

WILHELM KILMAN. Well, my good man, what about the railway?

PICKEL. I told my neighbour from the beginning that when I stood face to face with the Minister he'd . . . indeed, he had some opinions about white gloves and such things . . . nevertheless I always thought to myself, why, a Minister, what a lot he must know! Wellnigh as much as God Himself . . . Whether there'll be a good crop, whether there'll be war, whether the railway will run over one's own property or over . . . Yes, that's what a Minister is! . . . Oh, I haven't only come about the railway, though indeed the railway is not without its importance . . . Nevertheless, the other matter is of importance too.

There am I in Holzhausen—the newspapers, they don't put you wise . . . I said to myself: When you stand face to face with the Minister . . . If it's not asking too much, where is all this going to lead to? If the railway runs through Holzhausen and one can travel direct to India? . . . And in China the yellow people are rebelling. And they're making guns with which they can shoot as far as America. and the niggers in Africa are making speeches and trying to clear the missionaries out. And they say that the Government is going to do away with money . . . and there sits the Minister, I said to myself, and he has to cope with it all. I'll go and ask him himself, I said to myself. Your Excellency, what will become of the world?

WILHELM KILMAN. What will become of the world?

PICKEL. What will you make of it, I mean?

WILHELM KILMAN. Let's have a cognac first. Do you smoke?

PICKEL. Too kind of your Excellency. Indeed, I said to myself from the beginning: Only stand face to face with the Minister.

WILHELM KILMAN. The world—the world——! H'm! It's not so easy to answer that. Drink.

PICKEL. That's what I've always said to my neighbour. Indeed, my neighbour, that is, the one who rented the municipal meadows . . . they ought to have cost 200 Marks, but he is a relation of the Burgomaster's, and when one is a relation . . . (*A knock at the door.*)

SERVANT. I wish to remind your Excellency that your Excellency must go out at 2 o'clock.

WILHELM KILMAN. Yes, I know. So dear Mr. Pickel, you can go back tranquilly to Holzhausen. Greet Holzhausen on my behalf. Drink up your cognac.

PICKEL. Yes, your Excellency. And the railway . . . And indeed if they run it over my proper . . .

WILHELM KILMAN (*pushing* PICKEL *gradually into the Antechamber, before* PICKEL *has been able to drink his cognac*). Nobody will suffer any injustice.

ANTECHAMBER

PICKEL (*going out*). I will tell them in Holzhausen.

SERVANT (*to* KARL THOMAS *who is still staring*). You must go. We are closing.

CURTAIN

CINEMATOGRAPHIC INTERLUDE

WOMEN IN HARNESS

WOMEN AS TYPISTS

WOMEN AS CHAUFFEURS

WOMEN AS ENGINE-DRIVERS

WOMEN AS POLICE

ACT TWO

Scene I

Eva Berg's Room

(Eva Berg *jumps out of bed and starts to dress hurriedly.*)

Karl Thomas (*in bed*). Where are you going?

Eva Berg. To work, my dear boy.

Karl Thomas. What is the time?

Eva Berg. Half-past six.

Karl Thomas. This life without work makes me more and more lazy.

Eva Berg. Yes, it's time you found work.

Karl Thomas. Sometimes I think. . . . *Bobbed* hair, do you call it? . . .

Eva Berg. Do you like it? . . .

Karl Thomas. That hair-bobbing suits you because you've got a face. Women without faces should be careful. That bobbing makes them naked. What a lot of them are naked!

Eva Berg. Do you think so?

Karl Thomas. The faces in the street, in the Underground . . . dreadful! I've never noticed before how few people have faces. Lumps of flesh, most of them, blown up with worry and conceit.

Eva Berg. Not a bad summing-up. . . . Does one long for women, in there?

Karl Thomas. During the first seven years I was as if buried. In the last year I suffered terribly.

Eva Berg. What does one do then?

Karl Thomas. Some carry on like boys; others fancy that sheets, bits of bread, coloured scraps of cloth are their beloved.

Eva Berg. The last conscious year must have been horrible for you.

Karl Thomas. Many a time I've hugged a pillow as if it were a woman, eager to warm myself.

Eva Berg. You must find work, Karl.

Karl Thomas. But why? Eva, come with me. We will go to Greece. To India. To Africa. There must be somewhere where men still live like children, who *are*, just *are*. In whose eyes the reflected heavens and the sun and the stars revolve and shine. Who know nothing of politics, who simply live, and are not always having to fight.

Eva Berg. You're disgusted with politics? Do you imagine you could break away from them? Do you imagine that a southern sun,

palm trees, elephants, coloured clothes, would make you forget the way mankind really lives? The paradise you dream about does not exist.

KARL THOMAS. Since I saw Wilhelm Kilman, I have had enough of all this. Why? In order that our own comrades may some day sit and grin like distorted images of the old gang? Thank you for nothing. You must be my To-morrow and my dream of the future.

EVA BERG. Flight, then?

KARL THOMAS. Call it flight, if you like. What is there in words?

EVA BERG. You cheat yourself. To-morrow you will be eating your heart out with impatience and concern about your destiny.

KARL THOMAS. Destiny?

EVA BERG. Because we can't breathe in this atmosphere of factories and slums. Because otherwise we shall slowly perish like caged animals.

KARL THOMAS. Yes, you're right.

(KARL THOMAS *starts to dress.*)

EVA BERG. You must look around for other lodgings, Karl.

KARL THOMAS. Can't I stay with you any longer, Eva?

EVA BERG. Honestly, no.

KARL THOMAS. Is the landlady complaining?

EVA BERG. I'd soon stop that.

KARL THOMAS. Then why can't I?

EVA BERG. I must be able to be alone. Understand me.

KARL THOMAS. Don't you belong to me?

EVA BERG. Belong? That word is dead. Nobody belongs to anybody else.

KARL THOMAS. Sorry. I used the wrong word. Am I not your sweetheart?

EVA BERG. Do you mean because I've slept with you?

KARL THOMAS. Doesn't that bind us?

EVA BERG. A glance exchanged with any stranger in the street can bind me closer to him than any night of love.

KARL THOMAS. Then what *do* you take seriously?

EVA BERG. Play I take seriously. . . . I am a living human being. Have I given up the world simply because I've been a fighter? The idea that a revolutionary must renounce the thousand little joys of life is ridiculous.

KARL THOMAS. What is . . . sacred to you?

EVA BERG. Why use mystical words about human things? You stare at me. As I speak to you I notice that the last eight years when you've been " buried " have changed us more than a century would have changed us in normal times.

KARL THOMAS. Yes, I think sometimes that I belong to a generation that has disappeared.

EVA BERG. What the world has gone through since that episode!

KARL THOMAS. You talk like that about the Revolution!

EVA BERG. That Revolution was only an episode. It is past.

KARL THOMAS. What is left?

EVA BERG. We are. With our will to Honesty. With our strength to work anew.

KARL THOMAS. And suppose during one of these nights you started a child?

EVA BERG. I wouldn't give it birth.

KARL THOMAS. Because you don't love me?

EVA BERG. How you miss the point! Because it would be an accident. Because I shouldn't deem it necessary.

KARL THOMAS. If I say stupid things now, false things, don't listen to them, listen to unsayable things about which you too are in no doubt. I need you. I found you at a time when we were conscious of the very heart-beat of life, because the heart-beat of death was so loud and insistent. Now I have lost my bearings. Help me, help me! The flame which once burned is out.

EVA BERG. You deceive yourself. It burns in another way. Less sentimentally.

KARL THOMAS. I feel it nowhere.

EVA BERG. What do you see? You are afraid of the light of day.

KARL THOMAS. Don't say that.

EVA BERG. Yes, let me speak. Have it all out and that will end the matter. Irrevocably. Either you will gain strength to start again or you will go under. To leave you to dream false dreams out of pity would be criminal.

KARL THOMAS. So you did pity me?

EVA BERG. Probably. It is not clear to me. There's never only *one* reason.

KARL THOMAS. Some experience has hardened you in these years: what?

EVA BERG. You're using expressions again which no longer hold good. I was a child: admitted. We can no longer allow ourselves to be children. The clear-sightedness and knowledge which we have gained can't be thrown away like toys which we've outgrown. Experience! yes, I have experienced a good deal. Men and circumstances. For the last eight years I have worked as formerly only men worked. For eight years I have had to decide for myself about every hour of my life. That's why I'm what I am. . . . Do you think it's been easy for me? Often, sitting in one of those hideous furnished apartments, I've flung myself on the bed and cried as if heart-broken. I felt I could no longer go on living. . . . Then came work. The Party needed me. I clenched my teeth and . . . Be reasonable, Karl. I must go to the office.

(FRITZ *and* GRETE *peep through the door. Vanish.*)

Remain here this morning. Do you want money? Don't say no out of stupid pride. I help you as a comrade: that's all. Good-bye.

(EVA BERG *goes.* KARL THOMAS *remains alone for some seconds.* FRITZ *and* GRETE, *the landlady's children, open the door and look in curiously.*)

FRITZ. Can I come in?

GRETE. We want to have a look at you.

KARL THOMAS. Come in, then.

(FRITZ *and* GRETE *come in, stare at* KARL.)

FRITZ. We've got to go soon.

GRETE. We've got tickets for the Pictures.

FRITZ. And this evening we're going to a boxing match. Shall we have a box, you and me?

KARL THOMAS. No, no. I can't box.

FRITZ. Can't you?

GRETE. But you can dance, can't you? Can you do the Charleston, or the Black Bottom?

KARL THOMAS. No. I can't dance either.

GRETE. Pity. . . . Were you really eight years in the lunatic asylum?

FRITZ. She won't believe it.

KARL THOMAS. Yes, I was.

GRETE. And before that were you sentenced to death?

FRITZ. Mother told us. She read it in the paper.

KARL THOMAS. Your mother lets rooms?

GRETE. Of course.

KARL THOMAS. Your mother is poor?

FRITZ. Only the war-profiteers are rich, mother always says.

KARL THOMAS. Do you know why I was sentenced to death?

GRETE. Because you were in the war.

FRITZ. Fathead! Because he took part in the Revolution.

KARL THOMAS. What do you know about the war? Has your mother told you about it?

GRETE. No, not mother.

FRITZ. We have to learn about battles in the school.

GRETE. What day they were on.

FRITZ. Silly that the World War had to come! As if we hadn't got enough to learn in the history lesson already! The Thirty Years War lasted from 1618–1648.

GRETE. Thirty years.

FRITZ. In that there are only half as many battles to learn as in the World War.

GRETE. And that only lasted four years.

FRITZ. The battle of Lüttich, the battle of the Marne, the battle of Verdun, and battle of Tannenberg . . .

GRETE. And the battle of Ypres.

KARL THOMAS. Do you know nothing else about the war?

FRITZ. That's enough for us.

GRETE. Oo ah! And last time I lost marks because I mixed up 1916 and 1917.

KARL THOMAS. And . . . what do you know about the Revolution!

FRITZ. We don't have so many dates to learn about that, so it's easier.

KARL THOMAS. What do the suffering and knowledge of millions of people signify, when the very next generation is deaf to them? All experience flows into a bottomless pit.

FRITZ. What did you say?

KARL THOMAS. How old are you?

GRETE. Thirteen.

FRITZ. Fifteen.

KARL THOMAS. And what are your names?

FRITZ, GRETE. Fritz, Grete.

KARL THOMAS. What they teach you about the war is meaningless. You know nothing about the war.

FRITZ. Oh, don't we!

KARL THOMAS. How can I describe it? Mothers were . . . no! What is there at the end of the street?

FRITZ. A great big factory.

KARL THOMAS. What do they make there?

FRITZ and GRETE. Acid—gas.

KARL THOMAS. What sort of gas?

GRETE. Don't know.

FRITZ. I do. Poison-gas.

KARL THOMAS. What is poison-gas used for?

FRITZ. When the enemy invades us.

GRETE. Yes, against the enemy, when they want to destroy our country.

KARL THOMAS. Who are your enemies?

(FRITZ *and* GRETE *are silent.*)

Give me your hand, Fritz. . . . What would happen to this hand if a bullet went through it?

FRITZ. Thank you kindly! Destroyed!

KARL THOMAS. What would happen to your face if a dram of poison-gas puffed over it? Did you learn that in school?

GRETE. Rather! It would be all eaten up. Nothing left of it! and then you die.

KARL THOMAS. Would you like to die?

GRETE. What funny questions you ask. Of course not.

KARL THOMAS. And now I'll tell you a story. Not a fairy tale. A true story which happened when I was nearby. During the war I was in the trenches somewhere in France. Suddenly one night we heard a cry, as if a man were in dreadful agony. Then all was still. Somebody had been killed, we thought. An hour later we heard another cry, and after that it never stopped. The whole night long a man shrieked. The whole day long a man shrieked. Always more and

more pitifully, and more helplessly. As it grew dark, two soldiers clambered out of the trench and wanted to fetch in the wounded man who'd been lying between the trenches. Bullets whizzed by, and both soldiers were killed. Two others tried. They never came back. Then the order came that nobody else was to leave the trench. We had to obey. But the man kept on shrieking. We didn't know whether he was a Frenchman, a German, or an Englishman. He cried as a babe cries, without words. Four days and four nights he cried. To us it was like four years. We stuffed our ears with paper. It didn't help. Then all was still. Oh, children, I wish I had the power to plant imagination in your hearts like corn in ploughed earth. Can you picture to yourselves what happened at that time?

FRITZ. Yes.

GRETE. Poor man!

KARL THOMAS. Yes, my dear. Poor man! Not "the enemy!" The man. The *man* cried. In France, and in Germany, and in Russia, and in Japan, and in America, and in England. In such moments, when one really gets down to the heart of things, one asks oneself: Why is all that? What is it all for? Would you ask the same thing also?

FRITZ, GRETE. Yes.

KARL THOMAS. In all countries men racked their brains over the same question. In all countries men gave the same answer. For gold, for land, for coal, for a lot of dead things, they die, they hunger, they despair. That is the answer. And here and there the pluckiest ones in the different nations shouted No in the faces of their blind leaders and demanded that the war should cease, and all wars; and struggled for a world in which all children would be happy. . . . Here, they lost. Here they were conquered.

(*Long pause.*)

FRITZ. Were there many of you?

KARL THOMAS. The people didn't understand what we were fighting for, did not see that it was on their account that we were rebelling.

FRITZ. Were there many on the other side?

KARL THOMAS. Very many. And they had money and hired soldiers.

(*Pause.*)

FRITZ. And you were silly enough to think that you could win?

GRETE. Yes, you were awfully silly.

KARL THOMAS (*stares at them*). What did you say?

FRITZ. You *were* silly.

GRETE. *Very* silly.

FRITZ. We must go now. Buck up, Grete!

GRETE. All right.

FRITZ and GRETE. Good-bye. So long!

(*Pause.* EVA BERG *comes back.*)

EVA BERG. I could go travelling with you now.

KARL THOMAS. What's the matter?

EVA BERG. Soon answered!

KARL THOMAS. Speak, then.

EVA BERG. I didn't get into the office. The porter gave me my notice-to-quit. Hoofed out of the Service!

KARL THOMAS. Kilman!

EVA BERG. Because I addressed the locked-out work-women yesterday.

KARL THOMAS. That fellow!

EVA BERG. Are you surprised? If you play with clay you can't help modelling it!

KARL THOMAS. Are you satisfied now, Eva? Come. Here's a time-table. We'll go this very night. Away! So long as it's away! Away!

EVA BERG. You speak for both of us? Nothing has changed.

(EVA BERG *goes.* KARL THOMAS *stares after her.*)

BLACK OUT

CINEMATOGRAPHIC INTERLUDE

EAST END OF A CITY

FACTORIES

CHIMNEYS

EVENING: WORKMEN LEAVE FACTORIES

CROWDS IN STREETS

SCENE II

WORKING-CLASS INN

The raised room at the back is fitted up as an Election Room. ELECTION OFFICER *at table; next to him another* ELECTION OFFICER. *At the Right a balloting cabinet: entrance towards the audience. In the foreground, customers at table. The light is localized on the part of the stage where the action takes place. Enter* THIRD WORKMAN.

THIRD WORKMAN. They're swarming in. The humbug flourishes!

SECOND WORKMAN. Shut up, you. Your daft anarchism wouldn't carry us much further.

THIRD WORKMAN. Oh, no doubt you get a long way further when *you* vote.

FIRST WORKMAN. Everything is right in its place. Even the election. Otherwise it wouldn't be there. If you're so dull that you can't grasp that . . .

THIRD WORKMAN. Only the stupidest of sheep elect their own butchers . . .

FIRST WORKMAN. Do you mean us?

SECOND WORKMAN. Do you want a punch on the jaw?

IN BACKGROUND.

ELECTION OFFICER. Silence, there, you. One can't hear one's own voice in here. What is your name?

OLD WOMAN. Barbara Stilzer.

ELECTION OFFICER. Where do you live?

OLD WOMAN. From 1st October I shall live at 7 Schulstrasse.

ELECTION OFFICER. What I want to know is, where do you live now?

OLD WOMAN. If the landlord thinks he can bully me because I complained at the House-shortage Office . . . 11 Margaretenstrasse, fourth floor.

ELECTION OFFICER. Right.

(OLD WOMAN *does not move.*)

You may record your vote.

OLD WOMAN. Oh, I only came because they say you can be punished if you don't vote.

ELECTION OFFICER. Very well, my good woman. Take the pencil, put a cross next to the name of your candidate, and then put the paper in the ballot-box in there.

OLD WOMAN. I haven't a voting paper, your Worship. I didn't know I had to bring a voting paper with me. . . . How can a person make head or tail of all those paragraphs . . . ?

ELECTION OFFICER. I'm not a magistrate. I'm the Election Officer. You can get a voting paper from one of those gentlemen there. Get one, and then come back again.

(*The voting continues.* OLD WOMAN *goes into front room.*)

FIRST VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. Here, young woman. You must put a cross against No. 1, then you will elect the right president. The War Minister is pledged to support Peace and Order and to look after the women.

(OLD WOMAN *turns the paper up and down undecidedly.*)

SECOND VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. No, mother: make a cross against No. 2. Don't you want coal and bread to be cheaper?

OLD WOMAN. It's a scandal the way the prices have gone up!

SECOND VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. All the fault of the big landowners. *They've* got bacon by the ton. Put the cross here, then you'll vote for the people's redemption.

(OLD WOMAN *turns the paper up and down undecidedly.*)

THIRD VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. As a class-conscious proletarian, vote for No. 3. That's the obvious decision, comrade. Peace

and Order? Rot! Peace and Order are for the capitalists, not for you. People's Redemption? Rot! If you knuckle under, then you will be allowed to kiss their hands, otherwise you'll be kicked. Make your cross against No. 3, or you pull the noose tight round your own neck.

(OLD WOMAN *turns the paper up and down undecidedly.*)

FIRST VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. No. 1, young woman! Don't forget.

SECOND VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. No. 2, mother!

THIRD VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. Only No. 3 will help you to burst your chains, comrade.

(OLD WOMAN *goes to the back.*)

ELECTION OFFICER. Have you your voting paper, now?

OLD WOMAN. Yes, three of 'em.

ELECTION OFFICER. Only put one in the ballot box. Otherwise your vote is void.

(OLD WOMAN *goes into the cabinet.*)

OLD WOMAN. May I come out again?

(*Comes out.*)

Good evening to you, your Worship. (*Goes to the* VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTORS.) All right, all right, don't get excited. I've put a cross against all three.

(*At table left.*)

FIRST WORKMAN. Fancy giving the women the vote! Only the parsons profit by that.

SECOND WORKMAN. Formerly, when I was in work, I usen't to sit as long in the pub. in a whole month as I do now in a day.

FIRST WORKMAN. And what does the wife say? I bet she gives it you hot. You've got scratches enough.

SECOND WORKMAN. The dole just about provides bloaters and jam for four days and the other three we live on rashers of wind. But it's all the same.

FIRST WORKMAN. I went out yesterday and there outside the pub. stood a middle-class woman, got up like a ham-bone she was, and rolling in fat. She said so that I could hear her: "One ought to pity those poor fellows." "My lady," I said to her, I said, "p'r'aps the time will come when you'll only be too glad if I have pity on you," I said.

SECOND WORKMAN. They ought to be hung, the lot of 'em. The whole bally lot of 'em.

FIRST WORKMAN. We'll show them by the election.

(KARL THOMAS *enters.*)

KARL THOMAS (*to inn-keeper*). Is Albert Kroll a customer of yours?
INN-KEEPER. He was here just now. He'll be back soon.
KARL THOMAS. I will wait.

(*Sits at table right. In front of* ELECTION OFFICER'S *table.*)

ELECTOR. That I won't put up with.
ELECTION OFFICER. A mistake, sir.
ELECTOR. . . . which has cost me my vote. I will make a protest against the election. The election must be declared invalid. I won't be put off. I'll take it to the High Court.
ELECTION OFFICER. I admit that your name wasn't put on the register.
ELECTOR. What's the use of that to me? I will have my rights. My rights.
ELECTION OFFICER. I am unable by law to . . .
ELECTOR. Deprive me of my rights—*that* you can do. I'll bring order here! I'll have the pigsty shown up.
ELECTION OFFICER. Be reasonable, sir. Consider, what a lot of unrest there is . . .
ELECTOR. I don't care. Right is right.
SECOND ELECTION OFFICER. As a citizen of the State you would not wish to . . .
ELECTOR. It shall appear in the newspapers, in black and white. There's something at the back of this. This *would* happen to me, always to me, always, always, always. But this is the finishing touch.

(*Runs away, collides in the doorway with* ALBERT KROLL *who is coming in.* ALBERT *starts, recognizes* KARL THOMAS.)

ALBERT KROLL. Well, I'm blessed!
KARL THOMAS. I've found you at last.
ALBERT KROLL. Poor chap! Bad times, weren't they! For us, too. Found work?
KARL THOMAS. I have been at the Labour Exchange six times. I learned type-setting after I was turned out of the university. What a crowd they are there! Our former comrades like heads of departments in general stores! They give one the cold shoulder. Worse than the old gang. They would be just as efficient in ordinary stores.
ALBERT KROLL. The usual story.
KARL THOMAS. You say that as if it must always be so.
ALBERT KROLL. No. Only it doesn't excite me any longer. Just a minute while I go up there. I'm on the election committee. One must keep an eye on the beggars.

(*Goes to the Election table.*)

SECOND ELECTION OFFICER. What a poll! What a poll! The election won't be over for an hour and already eighty per cent. Eighty per cent!

ALBERT KROLL. Three hundred workmen have protested because they were not on the register.

ELECTION OFFICER. Not my fault. Those in the buildings near the Chemical Works had to be struck off. They haven't lived there four months yet.

ALBERT KROLL. But the students have the right to vote. How long have they been here? Three weeks!

ELECTION OFFICER. The Ministry of the Interior decided, not I.

ALBERT KROLL. We will enter a protest against the election.

SECOND ELECTION OFFICER (*at telephone*). Is that the Sixth District? How many have voted? Fifty-six per cent? We've got eighty per cent. (*Hangs up receiver.*) Gentlemen, we are coming out on top —and they want to enter a protest!

(ALBERT KROLL *goes to* KARL THOMAS.)

ALBERT KROLL. Kilman has docked the vote of the workmen at the Chemical Factory.

KARL THOMAS. Let him! What of it! Albert—comrade, what has our fight given us? General stores, I said just now. Everybody has his own little job. Cashier No. 1, Cashier No. 2, Cashier No. 12! Not a breath of fresh air. The atmosphere is vitiated by rules and regulations. Because I hadn't some paper or other I had to take the whole bundle to the "proper authorities." . . . It all stinks of bureaucracy.

ALBERT KROLL. We know all that. We know much more. Those who failed us at the decisive moment talk all the bigger to-day.

KARL THOMAS. And you put up with it.

ALBERT KROLL. We fight. We are too few. Most of them have already forgotten and want to be left in peace. We must win more adherents.

KARL THOMAS. Hundreds of thousands are unemployed.

ALBERT KROLL. When hunger comes in at one door understanding goes out of the other.

KARL THOMAS. You talk like an old man.

ALBERT KROLL. One lives ten times as fast in such times as these.

KARL THOMAS. That's what Minister Kilman said.

ALBERT KROLL. I dare say. Because he has something to conceal. I only want to show you things as they are.

FOURTH WORKMAN (*coming in*). Albert, the police have seized our motor-lorry.

ALBERT KROLL. Why?

FOURTH WORKMAN. On account of the posters. We'd poked fun at the War Minister.

ALBERT KROLL. Form a deputation at once to go to the Government to protest.

FOURTH WORKMAN. We've already done that once to-day because one of our bill-distributors was arrested. Kilman receives no one.

ALBERT KROLL. Go ahead, go to the Ministry. Ring me up if he refuses to see you.

(FOURTH WORKMAN *goes out.*)

Did you hear, Karl ?

KARL THOMAS. What does the election matter to me ? Show me your faith, the old faith which was to have moved mountains.

ALBERT KROLL. You mean, I no longer have it ? Do you want me to tell you how often we've wanted to throw off the cursed yoke ? Do you want me to name the old comrades who were murdered, locked up, and hunted ?

KARL THOMAS. Only faith matters.

ALBERT KROLL. We want no blessedness in heaven. One must learn to see straight and yet not allow oneself to be downtrodden.

KARL THOMAS. The great leaders have never spoken like that.

ALBERT KROLL. D'you think not ? Well, I see it differently. They went straight ahead. It was as if they walked on glass, and when they looked through it they saw beneath them the stupidity of their own supporters and the enmity of the other side, and help from none. And I expect they saw much more besides.

KARL THOMAS. They wouldn't have gone a step forward if they'd stopped to measure the depths beneath them.

ALBERT KROLL. They never measured ; they only looked, and realized.

KARL THOMAS. It's all wrong, what you do. You even join in the election humbug.

ALBERT KROLL. And what do you do ? What do you want to do ?

KARL THOMAS. Something must be done. Some one must give an example.

ALBERT KROLL. Some *one* ? All. Every day.

KARL THOMAS. I mean something different. Some one must sacrifice himself. Then the lame will walk. I have cudgelled my brains day and night. Now I know what I must do.

ALBERT KROLL. I'm listening.

KARL THOMAS. Come nearer. (*Speaks softly to* ALBERT.)

ALBERT KROLL. You're no use to us.

KARL THOMAS. Only in that way can I help myself. Disgust chokes me.

(ALBERT KROLL *goes again to the* ELECTION OFFICER'S *table.*)

ALBERT KROLL. The police have seized our motor-lorry. That is sabotage against the Labour candidate.

AN ELECTOR. Your candidate has been bribed by foreigners.

ALBERT KROLL. Lies. Election twaddle !

ELECTION OFFICER (*to* ALBERT KROLL). You mustn't influence voters. (*To* ELECTOR.) This isn't an information bureau, sir.

ALBERT KROLL. I don't want to influence anybody. I suppose I may tell the truth.

SECOND ELECTION OFFICER (*at telephone*). What do you make the time? Eight-fifty? Yes, yes: goes swimmingly here. Crowds of them coming in. They're bringing in the halt and the blind now. (*Puts up receiver.*) The clock in the Fifth District is eight minutes fast. Eight minutes! I didn't tell them so. We shall know the results eight minutes earlier.

(ALBERT KROLL *goes to the table where* KARL THOMAS *is.*)

ALBERT KROLL. They shut my mouth when I want to speak the truth. I won't submit to that.

KARL THOMAS. What courage! In truth, you are cowards, all of you, all! If only I'd stayed in the lunatic asylum! My own little plot already disgusts me. For whom? For a pack of white-livered electoral stick-in-the-muds!

ALBERT KROLL. You seem to expect the world to be a sort of firework display got up for your benefit, with rockets and catherine-wheels and battle-cries. It's you who're the coward, not I.

(*At table left.*)

FIRST WORKMAN. Have you voted?

SECOND WORKMAN. No. I'm going to now. Why shouldn't I vote for Reconciliation of the Classes when Lena's mistress votes for it? Something must be wrong with Kilman, I tell you. Lena's mistress has got her head screwed on the right way. She's altogether tip-top. On Sunday, when Lena has a day out, her mistress always comes into the kitchen. "Lena," she says. "I hope you'll have a nice Sunday," she says; and then she holds out her hand. Every time.

FIRST WORKMAN. That shows you!

(SECOND WORKMAN *goes to Election table.* PICKEL *comes in.*)

PICKEL. Excuse me. Can one vote here?

(*The* VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTORS *flock round* PICKEL.)

FIRST VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. Peace and Order throughout the land and God for our dear Fatherland. Vote for No. 1.

SECOND VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. Wake up, wake up, it's not too late to vote aright and serve the State! Vote for No. 2.

THIRD VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTOR. The President of Number Three makes working-man and peasant free! Vote for No. 3.

PICKEL. Thank you, thank you.

(PICKEL *goes to the Election table.*)

ELECTION OFFICER. What's your name?

PICKEL. Pickel is my name.

ELECTION OFFICER. Where do you live?

PICKEL. Although I live in Holzhausen, nevertheless . . .

ELECTION OFFICER. Your name doesn't appear in the register. Do you write your name with a B ?

PICKEL. Where do I . . . ? Pickel . . . Pickel . . . with P—P. Not two P's. Indeed, I want to explain that . . .

ELECTION OFFICER. Your explanation is of no use. You can't vote here. You're in the wrong district.

PICKEL. I must explain to you, sir, that . . . you see, although I live in Holzhausen . . .

ELECTION OFFICER. What do you want here ? Don't hinder the election, please. Next.

(*The election continues.*)

PICKEL (*to* KARL THOMAS *who is about to go*). Though to me, personally, it makes no difference whether I vote or not, nevertheless, I don't want to be ungrateful to the Minister. I want to give him my vote.

KARL THOMAS. Leave me in peace.

(PICKEL *goes to the* THIRD WORKMAN.)

PICKEL. Although indeed I ought to have gone home long ago ; I only meant to stay here one day ; but it's never stopped raining.

THIRD WORKMAN. If only the rain would pour in here and flood the whole show ! Damn fraud ! Might just as well wipe their behinds with the voting papers.

PICKEL. I don't mean that exactly. You know, I never travel when it's raining. I waited six weeks before I set out to see the Minister, because it always looked as if there was rain in the atmosphere.

(FINANCIER *enters.* VOTING-PAPER DISTRIBUTORS *crowd round him.*)

FINANCIER. Thanks.

(*Goes to* ELECTION OFFICER.)

ELECTION OFFICER. At your service, sir. Do you still live in Opernplatz, sir.

FINANCIER. Yes. I'm somewhat late.

ELECTION OFFICER. Still time, sir. Over there, if you don't mind.

(FINANCIER *goes to the ballot-box.*)

PICKEL. I had an uncle who was struck by lightning on the railway. Indeed, the railway lines draw the lighting down ; nevertheless, it's men who are responsible, with their newfangled contraptions.

ELECTION OFFICER (*to* FINANCIER *who has left the ballot-box*). Always at your service, my dear sir . . .

(FINANCIER *goes.*)

THIRD WORKMAN. He makes the running and the fools of workers swallow the dust.

PICKEL. The wireless and the electric waves—they disturb the atmosphere. But nevertheless . . .

ELECTION OFFICER. The ballot is closed.

FIRST WORKMAN. Well, I'm curious . . .

SECOND WORKMAN. What's the odds on the downfall of the War Minister?

THIRD WORKMAN. He'll be elected all right. And serve you right!

SECOND WORKMAN. Don't spout such drivel, you old anarchist!

WIRELESS

Attention! Attention! First election result. Twelfth District. 714 votes for the War Minister, His Excellency von Wandsring; 414 votes for Mr. Kilman; 67 for Mr. Bandke.

SECOND WORKMAN. Mr. Bandke the builder! Oh!

FIRST WORKMAN. Swizzle!

THIRD WORKMAN. Bravo!

(FIRST *and* THIRD WORKMAN *go.*)

PICKEL. Mr. Election Officer, you really ought not to finish yet, I insist . . . Indeed, I am only . . . those in the City . . . in a word, I know the Minister, Mr. Kilman: I'm a friend of his . . .

ELECTION OFFICER. Lodge a complaint, then.

PICKEL. If Mr. Kilman needed only one more vote . . . Just think if it had depended on my vote . . .

WIRELESS

Attention! Attention! Announcement from Osthafen. 6,000 for Mr. Bandke; 4,000 for Mr. Kilman; 2,000 for His Excellency von Wandsring.

CROWD IN THE STREET. Hurrah, hurrah!

ALBERT KROLL. That's the dock-labourers. Our pioneers! Bravo!

KARL THOMAS. Why bravo? What pleasure can you find in votes? Are they a . . . *deed?*

ALBERT KROLL. "Deed," no. A spring-board to deeds.

WIRELESS

Attention! Attention! In the Capital the latest returns give Mr. Kilman the majority.

CROWD IN THE STREET. Hurrah for Kilman! Hurrah for Kilman!

SECOND WORKMAN. Didn't I tell you? Where's my three glasses of beer? Fork out! Fork out!

FIRST WORKMAN. Who said anything about three glasses of beer? We agreed on half a quartern of whisky.

SECOND WORKMAN. Now you're trying to back out of it.

FIRST WORKMAN. Shut up, you . . .

PICKEL. For my part I shall never rest until . . . The Minister

would have had . . . if he'd had my vote . . . nevertheless, his election . . .

SECOND ELECTION OFFICER. Gentlemen, we have broken the record. Ninety-seven per cent. Ninety-seven per cent!

KARL THOMAS. If only I understood! If only I understood. Have I got into a madhouse?

WIRELESS

Attention! Attention! At nine-thirty we shall announce the result.

SECOND WORKMAN. I back Kilman. Ten beers. Who takes me?

PICKEL. I would willingly . . . If my vote . . .

SECOND ELECTION OFFICER. We must put it in the newspaper. Ninety-seven per cent poll! It's never happened before. It's never happened before!

PICKEL. If they'd let me record my vote, the percentage would have . . .

(*Tumult at door. Enter Workmen.*)

THIRD WORKMAN. They've killed Mother Meller.

FOURTH WORKMAN. The dirty dogs. An old woman.

ALBERT KROLL. What's the matter?

FIFTH WORKMAN. She wanted to stick a handbill on the Chemical Factory wall.

FOURTH WORKMAN. With a truncheon . . . An old woman.

THIRD WORKMAN. She went down bang on the pavement . . . and then, no more.

FIFTH WORKMAN. Since when has it been illegal to paste bills?

THIRD WORKMAN. Question! Because we have a free election!

FOURTH WORKMAN. Right on the head. An old woman.

KARL THOMAS. Did you hear?

ALBERT KROLL. Come, comrades . . .

(ALBERT KROLL *is going to the door. At this moment they bring in the unconscious* MRS. MELLER. ALBERT KROLL *lays her gently on the floor.*)

A cushion . . . Water . . . Fainted . . . She's alive.

FOURTH WORKMAN. Without warning. With a truncheon. An old woman.

FIFTH WORKMAN. And the Government'll have to answer for this!

THIRD WORKMAN. Answer to who? To themselves? You're not half simple!

ALBERT KROLL. Mother Meller, I . . . Breathe gently . . . that's right . . . Now you can lie down again. That's Karl Thomas. Do you recognize him again?

MRS. MELLER. You, Karl . . .

ALBERT KROLL. What happened? Can you tell me?

MRS. MELLER. Oh, on one of the handbills the " i " wasn't dotted

. . . Then one of those fellows set upon me with a truncheon. In large type, it was . . . They've arrested Eva.

(*Tumult at door.* FIRST *and* THIRD WORKMEN *come in with* WARDER RAND.)

FIRST WORKMAN. Here is our dear brother . . .

THIRD WORKMAN. I know him. Constant attendant at our meetings. Always the most violent.

FIRST WORKMAN. Provocateur!

SEVERAL WORKMEN (*falling on* RAND). Do him in! Do him in!

(ALBERT KROLL *jumps between them; seizes* RAND *by the arm.*)

ALBERT KROLL. Peace, there!

KARL THOMAS. To hell with peace! Must we swallow everything? There's your election victory!

(KARL THOMAS *goes to strike* RAND *down.* ALBERT KROLL *grips* KARL THOMAS *with his left hand.*)

Here, you—let me go!

ALBERT KROLL. I leave him to you, Mother Meller.

FIFTH WORKMAN. Oughtn't we to ask the Party first?

ALBERT KROLL. The Party! Are we a pack of kids!

RAND. Thank you, Mr. Kroll.

ALBERT KROLL. Where have we met?

RAND. I was your warder.

MRS. MELLER. Well, I'm blessed! A jolly reunion! Shall we have a nice cup of coffee together to celebrate?

RAND. Haven't I always treated you in a friendly spirit, Mr. Kroll? You must grant me that.

ALBERT KROLL. So friendly that when you were ordered to lead us to the wall, you took us one by one, with a voice as sweet as honey and a face for kissing . . . "Please don't make it harder for me; I'm only doing my duty; it'll soon be over."

(WORKMEN *laugh.*)

RAND. What's a man to do? I'm a workman too. I've got to live too. I have five children; and a screw to spit at! I only carry out instructions.

FIRST WORKMAN. Here's the revolver we bagged from him.

(KARL THOMAS *springs up, grabs revolver, points it at* RAND.)

ALBERT KROLL (*striking him on the arm*). None of that nonsense.

(MRS. MELLER *has gone to* KARL THOMAS, *draws him to her.*)

What have you stuffed your belly with? You're not troubled by the craze for slimness. (*Pulls a bundle of fly-sheets from* RAND's *waistcoat.*) "Comrades, Beware of the Jews." "Foreign elements." "Don't

allow the Wiseacres of Israel . . " So you've got your convictions, too.

RAND. I should say so. The Jews . . .

ALBERT KROLL. How much money do convictions bring you in? Get out of it now . . . Quick march! I've protected you this time. A second time I shouldn't be able to, even if I wanted to.

PICKEL. Perhaps it *is* the Jews . . .

(RAND *goes.*)

WORKMEN. You wait till you're caught again!

KARL THOMAS. No, Mother Meller, no; let me go. I will speak to him . . . Why do you put the brake on?

ALBERT KROLL. Because I want to go full steam ahead when the time comes. It needs strength to have patience.

KARL THOMAS. That's what Kilman says.

ALBERT KROLL. Fool!

KARL THOMAS. What can I do to understand you?

ALBERT KROLL. Work at something.

MRS. MELLER. I'll tell you what, boy. The hotel where I'm working needs an under-waiter. I'll get on the right side of the head-waiter. Have you got diggings? You can stay with me.

ALBERT KROLL. Do that, Karl. You must take part in everyday life.

MRS. MELLER. I do like you, Albert . . . you've drunk my coffee as if it were your very own! Another coffee, guv'nor!

FOURTH WORKMAN. With a truncheon. An old woman.

WIRELESS

Attention! Attention!

(*Wireless goes out of order. Buzzing noises.*)

PICKEL. The atmosphere . . .

WIRELESS

The War Minister, His Excellency von Wandsring, has been elected by a great majority to the Presidency of the Republic.

(*In the street, singing, cries, shouting, and in the background appears on the screen the Portrait of the President.*)

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE I

A SMALL ROOM

(STUDENT *reading. A knock.*)

STUDENT. Who's there?

COUNT LANDE. Well, what do you say to the new President?

STUDENT. No doubt he has the best intentions.

COUNT LANDE. What's the good of that to us? Kilman remains Prime Minister.

STUDENT. Really?

COUNT LANDE. Have you a cigarette? Our Society had better be dissolved.

STUDENT. What? What did you say?

COUNT LANDE. Kilman . . .

STUDENT. Something must happen. We go on talking about the Great Deed . . .

COUNT LANDE. Can anybody listen at that door?

STUDENT. No . . . What's the matter?

COUNT LANDE. Here.

STUDENT. The decision . . .

COUNT LANDE. Read . . .

(COUNT LANDE *gives* STUDENT *a paper.*)

STUDENT. I and Lieutenant Frank?

COUNT LANDE. You two.

STUDENT. When?

COUNT LANDE. Can't say. You must be ready at any moment.

STUDENT. How suddenly it's come.

COUNT LANDE. Do you hesitate? You've offered yourself twice voluntarily. Can you forget that that same Kilman who ought to have been stood against the wall and shot eight years ago to-day, as Minister, betrays the Fatherland?

STUDENT. Hesitate—no! It goes against the grain having to wait before acting.

COUNT LANDE. Curb yourself a bit. You've taken the oath of allegiance. You have set sail in the service of the Fatherland. Now it is time to drop anchor.

STUDENT. But if one is hedged in all round, hunted, baited . . . and within closed frontiers?

COUNT LANDE. In the first place, that is still a matter of doubt. If you're in a hole, you will be helped. If you reach the frontier, good! If you don't reach the frontier . . . well, you must be prepared for sacrifice. But there's no reason why you should doubt that the judges will be reasonable and enter sympathetically into your motives.

STUDENT. May I leave a letter behind for my mother?

COUNT LANDE. Out of the question. The National Cause mustn't depend upon accidents. I know there are cowards in our midst who would be ready to compromise. They would think nothing of sacrificing us for tactical reasons!

STUDENT. I know so little about politics. And I never went to the front. I joined up, and a month later the whole thing came to an end. I hate the Revolution as I have never hated anything, ever since one day. My uncle was a general. We boys worshipped him as if he were a god. He commanded an army corps. Three days after the revolution I was sitting with him; there was a ring. A private bounced in. "I represent the Soldiers' Soviet. I am informed that the people in the streets are incensed by your epaulettes. To-day nobody wears epaulettes. We have undecorated shoulders." My uncle stood as straight as a post. "I'm to give up my epaulettes, eh?" "Yes." My uncle took his sword, which lay on the table, and drew it out of its sheath. I was awfully alarmed. I shifted nearer to him, so that I could stand by. The old man gave a hard cough, and his eyes weren't dry. "Sir, for forty years I have honourably worn the uniform of my Emperor. Once in my experience an under-officer was degraded by having his stripes torn from his uniform. What you demand of me to-day is the meanest thing that anybody could ask of me. If I may no longer honourably wear my uniform, here . . ." And the old man bent the sword, snapped it, and threw it at the feet of the soldier. That soldier was Mr. Kilman . . .

COUNT LANDE. That dog!

STUDENT. Next day my uncle was shot. On a piece of paper which he left behind were the words: "I cannot survive my beloved Fatherland's shame. May my death open the eyes of the duped people."

COUNT LANDE. My career has also gone phut. What are we to-day in comparison with the mob? Nobodies. And in society umpteen miles behind the *nouveau riche*. We will avenge your uncle.

BLACK OUT

SCENE II

FAÇADE OF GRAND HOTEL

The front wall open, exposing the rooms of the hotel. Thus :

<table>
<tr><td colspan="12">GRAND HOTEL</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="12">WIRELESS STATION</td></tr>
<tr><td>87</td><td>88</td><td>89</td><td>WC</td><td>90</td><td>91</td><td>92</td><td>93</td><td>94</td><td>95</td><td>96 open</td><td>97</td><td>98</td></tr>
<tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td>32</td><td>33</td><td>34</td><td>WC</td><td>35</td><td>36</td><td>37</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Private room.</td><td colspan="4" rowspan="2">Vestibule</td><td colspan="5">Club room.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Hotel staff
and Service room.</td><td colspan="5">Writing room.</td></tr>
</table>

BLACK OUT. THEN LIT UP.

VESTIBULE

Dancing couples

BLACK OUT

Between the scenes one has glimpses of the vestibule and hears jazz band.

PRIVATE ROOM

(*Enter* FINANCIER, SON, HEAD-WAITER *and* PAGE-BOY.)

FINANCIER. Everything ready ?

HEAD-WAITER. Here is the menu, sir. Would you like anything altered ?

FINANCIER. Good. Bring something light for me personally. I dare not eat heavy food. My stomach . . . A little broth, chicken ; stewed fruit without sugar.

HEAD-WAITER. At your service, sir.

(HEAD-WAITER *goes.*)

SON. I'm still doubtful . . .

FINANCIER. Why shouldn't one try to do it through the wife ? A try-on . . . why not ?

SON. She must be simplicity itself. Recently, at a Government banquet, she told stories about the days when she was a cook.

FINANCIER. I should like to have seen Kilman's face. It's " Your Excellency " here and " Your Excellency " there on the least provocation. Yes, if there were still titles and orders . . . But to-day the only passport is money. As soon as one has passed the first 100,000

marks Idealism is put on a peg in the hall. But you keep calm : he'll get what *he* wants and I will get the State credit facilities *I* want.

SON. As you will.

(*Enter* WILHELM KILMAN *and* WIFE, *accompanied by* HEAD-WAITER *and* KARL THOMAS *dressed as waiter, who helps them off with overcoats, etc.*)

FINANCIER. Good evening, your Excellency. I'm delighted, Mrs. Kilman . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. The Service wears me out. People think it means sitting in arm-chairs and smoking fat cigars. Forgive me for being late. I had to receive the Mexican Minister.

FINANCIER. Let's make a start.

(*They all sit at table.* WAITER *brings food, assisted by* KARL THOMAS.)

MRS. KILMAN. What is that by my plate ?

FINANCIER. A *petit rien*, dear lady. I took the liberty of bringing you a rose.

MRS. KILMAN. A rose . . . But I see a case . . . is it gold ? And set with pearls !

FINANCIER. This is where you open it . . . this catch . . . See, a rose—La France—my favourite rose. I hope you like it . . .

MRS. KILMAN. Really, Mr. . . . that's awfully kind. But I really can't accept it. What could I do with it ?

WILHELM KILMAN. Really, my dear sir . . .

FINANCIER. My dear Mr. Kilman, please say no more. Yesterday I bought three of these things at an auction. Eighteenth Century. Louis-Quatorze. And I already possess two or three.

MRS. KILMAN. You are so kind. We thank you very much for your kindness, but please take the case back.

WILHELM KILMAN. You know what slanderous tongues there are about. One must avoid the very appearance of evil.

FINANCIER. I'm extremely sorry, but it never occurred to me . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. Let's drink to the compromise. Emma, take the rose. What strong scent this La France has. More pleasant than France herself, eh ? Hahaha ! And when we come to see you we can admire the gold case in your cabinet.

FINANCIER. To your health, Mrs. Kilman ! To yours, your Excellency. Waiter, bring me Mouton Rotschild, 1921.

KARL THOMAS. Right, sir.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

WIRELESS STATION

OPERATOR. So you've come at last. I called three times.

KARL THOMAS. I was busy down below.

OPERATOR. Here is a telegram for Mr. Kilman, the Prime Minister. It was sent on here by order of the Ministry.

KARL THOMAS. Does one really hear the whole earth here?

OPERATOR. Is that news to you?

KARL THOMAS. Whom are you listening to now?

OPERATOR. New York. Great overflow of Mississippi announced.

KARL THOMAS. When?

OPERATOR. Now, at the present moment.

KARL THOMAS. As we speak?

OPERATOR. Yes, as we speak the Mississippi bursts its banks and people flee.

KARL THOMAS. And what do you hear now?

OPERATOR. I've turned on 1100 wave-lengths. I'm listening-in to Cairo. The jazz band at Mena House, the hotel near the Pyramids. They are playing during dinner. Do you want to hear? I'll switch on the loud speaker.

LOUD SPEAKER. Cairo calling! Wireless Stations of the world! The latest slogan: "Hoppla! So this is life!"

(*Jazz music.*)

OPERATOR. You can see them too.

(*On the screen, Restaurant at Mena House. Ladies and gentlemen dining.*)

KARL THOMAS. Can one see the Mississippi also?

OPERATOR. I say, who are you, that you behave like a babe in arms?

KARL THOMAS. Oh . . . I've been living in a . . . village for the last ten years.

OPERATOR. Here!

LOUD SPEAKER. New York calling! Total deaths, 8,000. Chicago threatened. Further report will follow in three minutes.

(*On the screen, a scene of the flood.*)

KARL THOMAS. Ungraspable! At this very moment . . .?

LOUD SPEAKER. New York calling! New York. Royal Shell 104. Standard Oil 102. Rand Mines 116.

KARL THOMAS. What's that?

OPERATOR. New York Exchange. Quotations for petroleum. I'll switch round. Latest news from all over the world.

LOUD SPEAKER. Unrest in India . . . Unrest in China . . . Unrest in Africa . . . Paris! Paris! Houbigant the fashionable perfume. Bucharest! Bucharest! Famine in Roumania. Berlin! Berlin! Elegant ladies delight in green wigs. New York! New York! The largest bombing plane in the world invented. Capable of destroying European capitals in a second. Attention! Attention! Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Calcutta, Tokio, New York. Gentlemen drink Mum Extra Dry . . .

KARL THOMAS. Enough! Enough! Put it up.

OPERATOR. I'll switch it round.

LOUD SPEAKER (*one hears confused cries*). He ! he ! he ! Feste, feste, feste ! . . . he is swimming . . . Swindle ! (*A bell.*) He's getting off . . . Macnamara ! Tonani ! Macnamara ! . . . Eviva, eviva . . .

OPERATOR. Six-day races in Milan. . . . Now I'll hear something interesting. The first passenger aeroplane from New York–Paris announces that a passenger has been overcome by a heart attack. He wants to connect up with heart specialist. Doctor's advice wanted. Now you hear the heart-beat of the patient.

(*On the* LOUD SPEAKER *one hears the beating of a heart. On the screen, aeroplane over the ocean. The patient.*)

KARL THOMAS. A man's heart-beat, in the middle of the ocean !

OPERATOR. Fine, eh ?

KARL THOMAS. How wonderful it all is ! And what does mankind make out of it ? . . . They live like a lot of sheep a thousand years behind the times.

OPERATOR. We shan't change the world. I made a discovery of how petroleum could be made out of coal. They bought up my patent for a handful of cash, and then what did they do ? Destroyed it. Their Lordships the oil magnates . . . You must go now. The telegram is important. Who knows what to-morrow will bring forth ? Perhaps war.

KARL THOMAS. War ?

OPERATOR. Incidentally, this apparatus helps there too, helping men to kill one another in a more refined manner. What's the prize turn of electricity ? The electrocutionist's chair ! There are machines controlling electric waves which, if switched on in London, would make Berlin a heap of ruins. We won't change matters. Get off. Hurry up.

KARL THOMAS. Right-o !

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

CLUB ROOM

(*Debating Society : Union of Brain Workers.*)

PHILOSOPHER X. I've come to this conclusion : When quality is lacking, quantity does not take its place. Hence my precept. Let nobody marry beneath him. Let everybody, by the judicious choice of a mate on a higher level than himself, raise the standard of his posterity. But what do we do now, gentlemen ? Negative breeding ! The very least, gentlemen, the very least condition of matrimony should be equality of birth. Trust instinct ! Ah, but unfortunately instinct has for centuries been so onesided that it will take generations before we are able to breed a better type.

LYRIC POET. Does that appear in Karl Marx?

PHILOSOPHER X. I conclude: The instincts must be refined and spiritualized. The vital brute-force must more and more be directed towards something superior.

LYRIC POET. Does that appear in Karl Marx?

PHILOSOPHER X. Only thus is the deteriorated white race to be elevated again. Only thus can the finer blossoms flourish as formerly. But many will ask, how can one recognize good blood? And he who is unable to judge that in others or in himself, particularly in himself, is beyond help. He has become so devoid of instinct (*turns to* LYRIC POET) that I personally would strongly recommend extinction. There, indeed, is the grandeur of my Academy of Wisdom: it makes people wise; it leads those who formerly went on cheerfully living their lives willingly to die out. Once this is taken as a matter of course, then in this sphere also will Evil be overcome by Good.

VOICES. Bravo! Bravo! Order!

CHAIRMAN. Lyric Poet Y has the word.

POET. Gentlemen, we are gathered together as brain workers. I wish to ask if the theme upon which Philosopher X has spoken in any way helps us to solve our problem—the spiritual redemption of the proletariat. In Karl Marx . . .

CRITIC. Don't always swank about having read Marx.

POET. Mr. Chairman, I call on you to protect me. Yes, indeed, I have read Marx, and believe me, he's not such a fool. I dare say he lacks the feeling for every new fad that we . . .

CHAIRMAN. You must confine your remarks to the subject of discussion. I'll call on somebody else to speak.

POET. Then I may as well go. Go to hell all of you!

VOICES. Scandalous! Scandalous!

PHILOSOPHER X. And he a poet!

CRITIC. He ought to be sent to a psychoanalyst. After he'd been treated he'd soon stop writing poetry. Poetry's nothing but suppressed complexes.

(PICKEL *comes in.*)

PICKEL. Indeed, I believe . . . however, am I right for the Green Tree Hotel?

CHAIRMAN. No. Private meeting.

PICKEL. Private . . . ? However, I thought the Green Tree Hotel . . . Nevertheless . . .

VOICES. Get out!

PICKEL. Thank you kindly, Mr. . . .

(PICKEL *goes.*)

CHAIRMAN. What do you want, Philosopher X?

PHILOSOPHER X. A short postscript, gentleman. An example. The Poet Y questions the relevance of my remarks to the problem of the spiritual redemption of the proletariat. Unrestrained instincts are

only to be found to-day among the lower classes. Question a proletarian, a waiter let us say, and evidence of my theory will be forthcoming.

VOICES. Waiter, waiter!

(KARL THOMAS *appears with a tray bearing glasses.*)

KARL THOMAS. The head-waiter will come at once.

VOICES. Stay here.

KARL THOMAS. I have service below, gentlemen.

PHILOSOPHER X. Listen, Comrade Waiter, young proletarian. Would you be willing to consummate the sexual act with the first attractive woman you met, or would you first consult your instincts on the subject?

(KARL THOMAS *laughs aloud.*)

CHAIRMAN. This isn't a laughing matter. The question is serious. Moreover, we are customers of your employer and you are the waiter.

KARL THOMAS. Oho! First "Comrade Waiter" and now "Keep your place." You wish to redeem the proletariat? Here in the Grand Hotel, eh? What would happen to you if it were redeemed? Where would *you* be? Back in the Grand Hotel? . . . Eunuchs!

VOICES. Scandalous! Scandalous!

(KARL THOMAS *goes.*)

PHILOSOPHER X. Lower-middle-class idea merchant!

CHAIRMAN. We come now to the second item of the agenda. Proletarian communal love and the problem of the intelligentsia.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

PRIVATE ROOM

FINANCIER. Hurry up with the liqueur, waiter!

KARL THOMAS. Excuse me, sir, I was detained.

FINANCIER. Hand over the cigarettes. Do you smoke, Mrs. Kilman?

MRS. KILMAN. No, thank you.

WILHELM KILMAN. This telegram brings the conflict to a head. To refuse us the oil concessions!

FINANCIER. Thank goodness I had the wit to advise my clients to sell out their Turkish holdings. How do you invest your money, your Excellency?

WILHELM KILMAN. Mortgages! Ha, ha, ha! I keep off speculation.

FINANCIER. Who's talking of speculation? You have duties, you have a position to keep up. A man with your gifts ought to make himself independent.

WILHELM KILMAN. As a State official I must . . .

FINANCIER. In matters of this kind you are a private individual. What do you get out of the State? A few dollars. Why not make use of your information? What's to prevent you? Even Bismarck, Disraeli, Gambetta didn't disdain. . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. What's that to do with me?

FINANCIER. I'll give you an example. The Council of the Ministry decide to reduce the contango: thereupon you sell out your shares, and who can criticize you if you decide to sell a few more . . . ? Indeed, not in your own name . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. That's enough of that.

FINANCIER. It would be an honour to give you my advice. . . . You know you can trust me.

WILHELM KILMAN. Waiter, where is the Press Conference taking place?

KARL THOMAS. In the writing-room.

WILHELM KILMAN. Is Baron Friedrich below?

KARL THOMAS. Yes, sir.

WILHELM KILMAN. Tell the Baron that I shall expect him at the Ministry at midnight.

(PICKEL *comes in.*)

PICKEL. If I am not mistaken . . . I wanted, you see, to . . . although the prices . . . nevertheless . . .

FINANCIER. Who is this man?

PICKEL. Ah, your Excellency. (*To* KILMAN.)

WILHELM KILMAN. I have no time. (*Turns away.*)

PICKEL. I didn't expect that from you, your Excellency. Wasn't it us who made you Prime Minister? Indeed, if my vote at the Presidential election had been . . . Nevertheless, your Excellency, you have me to thank for the . . .

(*Goes.*)

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

WRITING-ROOM

(*Journalists writing.* KARL THOMAS *at the door.*)

BARON FRIEDRICH. Gentlemen, what was formerly the problem of the historian, namely, the presentation to the public of the policy upon which the State has decided as the only possible solution, as, indeed, a moral necessity, is now yours. In this our Fatherland's hour of need the Government has the right to expect that every newspaper, ignoring party differences, will do its duty. We do not seek war. Let us always lay stress on that, gentlemen. As to the so-called sanctions, the less said the better. We want peace. But when the prestige of our State is tampered with, our patience gives out . . .

KARL THOMAS. Excuse me, sir. . . .
BARON FRIEDRICH. What is it?
KARL THOMAS. The Prime Minister desires to see you at midnight.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

HOTEL ROOM NO. 96

COUNT LANDE. I distinctly saw you ogle the fair girl at the next table.
LOTTE KILMAN. Are you afraid I shall deceive you with her.
COUNT LANDE. That sort of thing disgusts me. . . .
LOTTE KILMAN. Well, maybe you men disgust me. . . . Perhaps you're beginning to bore me.
COUNT LANDE. But darling . . .
LOTTE KILMAN. It's only women who can be tender in bed. I don't deny that I should like to run off with the little thing.
COUNT LANDE. You're drunk.
LOTTE KILMAN. I might be if you were a bit freer with your money.
COUNT LANDE. Let me send for a bottle of Cordon Rouge. . . .
LOTTE KILMAN. I should prefer the blonde girl—or a fire.
COUNT LANDE. Cover yourself up. I'll call the waiter.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

STAFF QUARTERS AND SERVICE ROOM

(HEAD-WAITER, KARL THOMAS, PORTER *and* PAGE-BOY *at supper.*)

HEAD-WAITER. Mussolini won at the Paris races. Thoroughbred. Three-year old.
PORTER. Price for the winner, 20 to 1; place, 7 to 1.

(WAITER *comes in.*)

WAITER. *Entrecôtes*, three.
HEAD-WAITER (*through hatchway, calling to kitchen*). Three *entrecôtes*. . . . Did you have anything on?
PORTER. Of course. Wouldn't get fat on the screw they give you here.
WAITER (*coming in*). Oxtail soup, three times; Madeira, twice.
KARL THOMAS. What on earth does this soup taste like!
PORTER. P'r'aps you'd rather eat *à la carte*!
WAITER (*coming in*). Two dozen oysters.
HEAD-WAITER. Two dozen oysters.
KARL THOMAS. I don't ask for oysters, but muck like that. . . . Why doesn't the Hotel Servants Union do something?
PORTER. Because they're hand-in-glove with the hotel directors.

It's all one to me. I don't expect anything from anybody. All alike. Before the inflation I used to save a mark a week. When I got ten I used to bank and ask them to give me half a jimmy-o-goblin for them. On Sunday I'd polish it up and on Monday I'd put it in the savings bank. I saved up for six hundred weeks. Twelve years. And what did I get out of it at the end? Dirt! Seven hundred worthless millions. Couldn't buy a box of matches with it. The likes of us are always done down.

HEAD-WAITER. They're drinking good stuff in the private room.

KARL THOMAS. The People's Prime Minister!

HEAD-WAITER. What do you know about it? If he's dining with a financier it's not without a good reason; otherwise he wouldn't be much of a minister.

PAGE-BOY. The gentleman in 101 always pinches my bottom.

HEAD-WAITER. Never mind. You know which side your bread's buttered.

(*Bell.*)

Which number.

PAGE-BOY. Ninety.

HEAD-WAITER. Karl, go up. The floor waiter asked me . . .

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

LANDING

PICKEL (*on stairs*). This is how it is. . . . But indeed, one had thought . . . one travelled two days on the railway . . . one would be happy for the rest of one's days because of it. In Holzhausen, I thought to myself, "Up there . . . there one would understand people," but there it's just the same as with the railway or one's property. . . . The atmosphere.

(KARL THOMAS *goes by.*)

Waiter, waiter.

KARL THOMAS. No time.

PICKEL. No time.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

ROOM 96

(*Knock.* KARL THOMAS *comes in.*)

COUNT LANDE. Why have you been such a time? What management! Bottle of Cordon Rouge. Well iced.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

SERVANTS' ROOM

KARL THOMAS *sits alone at table, head buried in hands.* MRS. MELLER *opens the door quietly.*)

MRS. MELLER. Tired, old boy?

(KARL THOMAS *does not move.*)

It is tiring the first day.

(KARL THOMAS *springs up; tears his tie from his neck, pulls off his tailcoat and throws it in a corner.*)

KARL THOMAS. There . . . and there . . . and there!

MRS. MELLER. What are you doing?

KARL THOMAS. I'm awake now, so much awake that I'm afraid I shall never sleep again.

MRS. MELLER. Calm yourself, Karl, calm yourself.

KARL THOMAS. Calm myself? Only a clod could be calm. Now I call *myself* Fool, as Albert Kroll did. I made up my mind to be patient. I've been here half a day and I've seen the daily round, in evening dress and in nightshirt. You're asleep, all of you! You're asleep! You've got to be awakened. I spit on your sweet reasonableness. If that's what the reasonable are like, then let me play the fool. You've all got to be woken up.

(*Bell. Pause.*)

MRS. MELLER. Karl . . .

KARL THOMAS. Let the devil wait on them!

(*Bell.*)

MRS. MELLER. Private room.

KARL THOMAS. Private room—Kilman? Good, I'll go.

(KARL THOMAS *hastily dresses.*)

MRS. MELLER. I'll come back soon. We'll have a talk, Karl.

(MRS. MELLER *goes.*)

KARL THOMAS (*looks at his revolver for a second*). This shot will wake them all up.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

ROOM 96

(*A light knock.*)

COUNT LANDE. Now, at once.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

HALF-DARK CORRIDOR

STUDENT. Where?

COUNT LANDE. In private room. Who goes in?

STUDENT. We cast lots. I. Lieutenant Frank is waiting in the car.

COUNT LANDE. Have you the waiter's coat on?

STUDENT (*opening overcoat*). Yes.

COUNT LANDE. Now for it. Quickly does it. You mustn't be arrested. If you should have bad luck, then . . . you must keep your own council. . . . Look out.

STUDENT. I've given my word of honour. . . .

BLACK OUT

LIGHT ON

PRIVATE ROOM

WILHELM KILMAN. That yarn was hot stuff. Just look at my wife —how red she's turned. She doesn't understand that sort of thing . . . ha ha ha!

FINANCIER. Do you know the one about Mr. Meyer in the railway carriage?

WILHELM KILMAN. What is it?

(*Enter* KARL THOMAS.)

FINANCIER. The waiter at last! Another bottle of cognac. What are you standing there for? What are you staring at? Don't you understand?

KARL THOMAS. Don't you know me?

WILHELM KILMAN. Who are you?

KARL THOMAS. Call me Karl. When we waited together to be buried in a common grave we didn't stand on ceremony. Are you ashamed to acknowledge me?

WILHELM KILMAN. Oh, it's you. . . . Don't talk rubbish. Come and see me to-morrow at the Ministry.

KARL THOMAS. You've got to answer for it to-day.

WILHELM KILMAN (*to* FINANCIER). Let him alone. A queer fellow I used to know. Owing to some romantic episode in his youth he went off the rails. Finds it difficult to grasp things.

KARL THOMAS. I am waiting for your answer.

WILHELM KILMAN. What for? What are you talking about? Do you want me to tell you again that times have changed? You'd rather damn the world than abandon your irrational demands. You'd curse the very men who are doing their best to bring about their realization.

KARL THOMAS. Oh, you . . .

WILHELM KILMAN. No more cant phrases, please; they don't wash.

FINANCIER. Hadn't I better send for the manager?

WILHELM KILMAN. For God's sake don't make a scene.

FINANCIER. Now, be calm, waiter. You're not well, eh? Here, take these ten marks.

WILHELM KILMAN. Let me add another ten.

(KARL THOMAS, *gripping the revolver in his pocket, looks in an expressionless fashion at the money, shrugs his shoulders in disgust, as if he were no longer interested in the deed he had been about to commit, is turning away.*)

KARL THOMAS. It's not worth while. I am unutterably indifferent to you . . .

(*The door is softly opened.* STUDENT *in waiter's tailcoat comes in, raises revolver above* KARL'S *shoulder; switches off electric light; shot. Scream.*)

FINANCIER. Light! Light! The waiter has shot the Prime Minister!

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

Scene I

Left of Hotel. In Park

(Karl Thomas *pursues* Student.)

Karl Thomas. Here! Here!

(Student *turns round and then runs on.*)

Here, I want to help you, comrade!

Student. Comrade? I'm not your comrade.

Karl Thomas. But didn't you fire at Kilman?

Student. Because he's a Bolshevist, because he's a revolutionary. Because he's sold our country to the Jews!

(Karl Thomas *makes an uncomprehending step towards him.*)

Karl Thomas. Has the world turned into a madhouse?

Student. Stand back, or I'll shoot you down.

(Student *runs on, jumps into a motor-car, which goes.* Karl Thomas, *seeing what has happened, tears the revolver from his pocket, fires two shots after it. Then pulls himself together; stands up in front of a tree.*)

Karl Thomas. Are you a beech tree? Or are you a padded wall? (*Touches it.*) That feels like bark, rough and split, and you smell of the earth. But are you really a beech tree?

(*Sits on bank.*)

My poor head! Like machine-gun fire! . . . Walk up, walk up, good people. The bell has rung. The journey begins. Penny a go! You see a house on fire, seize a pail and want to put it out, and instead of water you pour oil on the flames. You ring alarm bells all over the town to awaken the people, but the sleepers turn over on their bellies and snore the louder!

When others creep into the shadowy bosom of the night I see murderers lurking everywhere, the evil workings of their brains exposed to my gaze.

Like a watchman I run through the streets under the stars with thoughts that wound and wound.

Oh, why did they release me from the madhouse? Was it not good

to be in there, for all its North Pole cold and the beating of grey birds wings.

I have lost my hold on the world.
The world has lost its hold on me.

(*During the last two phrases two* POLICEMEN *enter ; go to him and grasp him by the wrists.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN. Here, young man, I suppose you *found* that revolver ?

KARL THOMAS. What do I know about it ? What do you know ? Even a revolver turns against its possessor, and out of its barrel spurts laughter.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Here, you, speak respectfully.

FIRST POLICEMAN. What's your name ?

KARL THOMAS. Every name is a fraud. Listen. Once I thought if I went straight across the park I should come to a hotel. Cup of coffee, please ! Sixpence. Do you know where one lands ? In the madhouse. And the police take jolly good care that nobody shall be sane.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Maybe. You're under arrest.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Don't make difficulties. If you try to escape, I fire.

FIRST POLICEMAN. On the contrary : you ought to be glad that we protect you. The people would lynch you.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Admit that you fired at the Minister.

KARL THOMAS. I ?

FIRST POLICEMAN. Yes, you.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Let's get him to the station.

BLACK OUT

(*Shouts of the people are heard.*)

SCENE II

POLICE COURT

Room of CHIEF OF POLICE

(*At table*, CHIEF OF POLICE. *Sudden ring.*)

CHIEF OF POLICE (*telephoning*). Hallo ! What is it ?—What ? Attempted assassination of Minister Kilman in Grand Hotel. Minister dead ? Close the Grand Hotel. Clear the streets. A suspect arrested ? Have him sent here. I'll wait. (*Hangs up receiver. To Secretary.*) Stay here. You must take down particulars. (*Telephones.*) Have all stations in readiness. Thank you. Ring them up in case they should be wanted. Of course, from left. . . . Put down any demonstrations. . . . That's all.

(*Meantime* POLICEMAN *enters with* PICKEL.)

PICKEL (*to* POLICEMAN). There is no need for you to hold so tight, sir. Who are you, after all? Although you live in a City where the rabble is, nevertheless you ought to be able to distinguish.

CHIEF OF POLICE. What is it?

POLICEMAN. The man was found walking about the corridors of the Grand Hotel, sir. . . Shortly before the assassination he was in the Minister's room. He doesn't live in the hotel, behaved suspiciously and can't explain why . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Good. What's your name?

PICKEL. Pickel is my name; indeed . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Answer my questions.

PICKEL. I waited indeed to . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE You were in the room of the murdered Minister shortly before the assassination? What were you doing there?

PICKEL. I have . . . well, General, I thought that the Prime Minister was a man of honour . . . nevertheless, when I went up to him in the hotel . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. You admit that you were concerned in the assassination, then? You had a personal grudge against the Minister?

PICKEL. What I want, you see, is . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. What did you want? Are you an anarchist Do you belong to some illegal society?

PICKEL. The Union of Soldiers of the Great War have indeed. . . . Although I was only at the base . . . the Soldiers' Union, General.

CHIEF OF POLICE. The Soldiers' Union? Can you prove that?

PICKEL. Certainly. Here is my membership card.

CHIEF OF POLICE. I see. So you are a nationalist. . . . Then why . . . Tell me, why did you murder the Minister?

PICKEL. I thought . . . I would have gone through fire and water for him.

CHIEF OF POLICE. Pay attention to my questions.

PICKEL. You know . . . I only came on account of the railway . . . and I went to the Ministry . . . and nothing more than that have I done!

CHIEF OF POLICE. Indeed.

PICKEL. Please, General, let me go back home.—The weather is changing . . . I could make the journey now . . . and my cows . . . my wife always said . . .

(*Telephone rings.*)

CHIEF OF POLICE (*telephoning*). Police Station. . . . Have you detained eye-witnesses? A man in waiter's tailcoat? One moment. Pickel, unbutton your overcoat.

PICKEL. You know I am wearing a . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Frock coat . . . aha!

PICKEL. But it's only because I . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Be quiet. (*Telephoning.*) Thanks. (*To* SECRETARY.) Take down particulars of this man Pickel.

SECRETARY. Your name? Christian and surnames.

PICKEL. Trustgod Pickel is my name, miss. As a boy they called me Godbeloved . . . but now indeed, as a matter of fact I am called just Trustgod. You know, the official Registration Officer who was related to my father . . . So long as they kept their health they played chess every evening.

(POLICEMEN *enter.*)

CHIEF OF POLICE. What is it?

FIRST POLICEMAN. We arrested a man in the Park—carried a revolver in his hand. Two bullets missing.

CHIEF OF POLICE. Bring him in.

(FIRST POLICEMAN *brings in* KARL THOMAS.)

Your name?

KARL THOMAS. Karl Thomas.

CHIEF OF POLICE. What were you doing with this revolver.

KARL THOMAS. It was to shoot the Minister . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Oh! This is quick going. . . . Two of them! Well, confess. Do you belong to Mr. Pickel's Soldiers' Union, too?

KARL THOMAS. To the Soldiers' Union?

PICKEL. General, I must point out that in our Soldiers' Union in Holzhausen . . . indeed, we don't admit any foreigners at all . . . not even those from neighbouring villages. . . . Though, you know, the President of the Republic is an Honorary Member.

CHIEF OF POLICE. Silence. . . . (*To* POLICEMAN.) What did the man look like?

SECOND POLICEMAN. The people wanted to lynch him, sir. We could hardly keep back the crowds.

CHIEF OF POLICE. Sit down. Tell me, why did you shoot at the Minister?

KARL THOMAS. Is he dead?

CHIEF OF POLICE. Yes.

KARL THOMAS. I didn't shoot.

CHIEF OF POLICE. Why, you just confessed . . .

PICKEL. No, General, there you are wrong. I know him. He is friend of the Minister; in fact . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Don't keep on interfering.

PICKEL. But you don't believe me . . . I am, you see, the Treasurer of the Soldiers' Union. And our Rules . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. I'll have you taken away. (*To* KARL THOMAS.) You looked upon the Minister as a danger, eh? An enemy of his country?

KARL THOMAS. The murderer thought that.

CHIEF OF POLICE. The murderer?

KARL THOMAS. I ran after him. I fired at him.

CHIEF OF POLICE. What nonsense is this!

PICKEL. If he says so, General . . .

(POLICEMAN *goes to* CHIEF OF POLICE, *speaks softly to him.*)

CHIEF OF POLICE. He makes the same impression on me. For that matter the other man, Pickel, also . . . Put them both in Remand cell No. 1. I'll come over at once. (*Telephones.*) Get me on to the Public Prosecutor.

PICKEL. General . . . I wanted to . . . you know. . . . I wanted to ask . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. What's the matter, now?

PICKEL. Is it settled, General? Shall I be put in prison?

CHIEF OF POLICE. Yes.

PICKEL. Well . . . Indeed . . . you know, in Holzhausen . . . When you think . . . And if my wife . . . And if my neighbour . . . the one who is related to the Burgomaster . . . and if the Soldiers' Union . . . Do you know what you are doing? I am punished before trial . . . What shall I do when I come out of prison? Where shall I go? I couldn't show my face again in Holzhausen.

CHIEF OF POLICE. When it is proved that you are not guilty, you can go home.

PICKEL. Nevertheless, punished beforehand . . .

CHIEF OF POLICE. Oh, I've no time to . . . ('*Phones*). Get me the Public Prosecutor.

PICKEL. He has no time either . . . White gloves, black gloves . . . what can one believe in?

BLACK OUT

SCENE III

ROOM OF EXAMINING JUDGE

(*At table sit* EXAMINING JUDGE *and* CLERK. *In front of table*, KARL THOMAS *handcuffed.*)

JUDGE. You only make your case worse. Witnesses have sworn that you expressed the intention in the Three Bears public-house of murdering the Prime Minister.

KARL THOMAS. I don't deny that. But I did not shoot him.

JUDGE. You admit the intention?

KARL THOMAS. The intention, yes.

JUDGE. Tell the witness Rand to come in.

(WARDER RAND *comes in.*)

Mr. Rand, do you know the prisoner.

RAND. Yes, your Worship.

JUDGE. Is it the same man as took your revolver away from you in the election room?

RAND. Yes, your Worship.

JUDGE. Thomas, what comments have you to make?

KARL THOMAS. I don't deny it; but . . .

RAND. If I may be allowed to give my opinion, the Jews are behind this business . . .

JUDGE. You had used the revolver, Rand?

RAND. No, your Worship. All the bullets must be there.

JUDGE. There are two short. That is your revolver?

RAND. My service revolver, your Worship.

JUDGE. Do you still deny having committed the crime, Thomas? Don't you wish to ease your conscience by confessing?

KARL THOMAS. I have nothing to confess; I did not shoot.

JUDGE. How do you explain the absence of two bullets?

KARL THOMAS. I fired on the assassin.

JUDGE. I see, you fired on the assassin. Well, the Great Unknown Assassin is missing. Perhaps you know this secretive murderer who, you say, came in behind you and fired?

KARL THOMAS. No.

JUDGE. I see. Let's call him the famous Mr. X.

KARL THOMAS. He was on the Right. He said so himself. I ran after him. I thought he was a comrade.

JUDGE. Don't talk nonsense. Do you think to cover the tracks of your confederates? We know you; and this time there will be no amnesty. Your intimate comrades are under lock and key already. Tell the head-waiter of the Grand Hotel to come in.

(HEAD-WAITER *comes in.*)

Do you know the prisoner?

HEAD-WAITER. Certainly, sir. He was an under-waiter at the Grand Hotel. If I'd known, sir, that . . .

JUDGE. Did the prisoner speak insultingly of Mr. Kilman?

HEAD-WAITER. Yes, sir. He said: "He's a splendid people's Minister!" No, "a *fine* people's Minister," he said.

JUDGE. Did you say that, Thomas?

KARL THOMAS. Yes, but I didn't shoot him.

JUDGE. Tell Mrs. Meller to come in.

(*Enter* MRS. MELLER.)

You know the prisoner?

MRS. MELLER. Yes, he is my friend.

JUDGE. Ah, your friend! You call yourself his comrade?

MRS. MELLER. Yes.

JUDGE. It was you who recommended the prisoner to the Grand Hotel?

MRS. MELLER. Yes.

JUDGE. The prisoner said to you : " You're all asleep ! Somebody must be done in. Then you will wake up."

MRS. MELLER. No.

JUDGE. Pull yourself together, witness. You are suspected of being a confederate. You got the prisoner the situation at the Grand Hotel. The prosecution presumes that this situation was only a blind to give the prisoner an opportunity to be near the Minister.

MRS. MELLER. If you know everything so much better than I do, arrest me too.

JUDGE. I ask you for the last time : Did the prisoner say that somebody must be done in ?

MRS. MELLER. No.

JUDGE. Tell the page-boy to come in.

(PAGE-BOY *enters.*)

Do you know the prisoner ?

PAGE-BOY. Yes, please, sir. When he had to take the plates in he broke one of them, and he said I was to hide the bits so that nobody could find them.

JUDGE. That is most interesting. Did you do that ?

KARL THOMAS. Yes.

JUDGE. That throws a significant light on your character. Boy, listen carefully. Did you hear the prisoner say : " You're all asleep. Somebody must be done in. Then you'll wake up."

PAGE-BOY. Yes, please, sir, and when he said it his eyes rolled and he screwed up his fist ; he looked awfully bloodthirsty. I've never seen faces like that except at the pictures. I was frightened.

JUDGE. Where did you go then ?

PAGE-BOY. I—I—I—I . . .

JUDGE. Tell the truth now.

PAGE-BOY (*beginning to cry ; turns to* WAITER). Please sir, I won't do it again ; I told you I wanted to go out, but I didn't go out at all. I was so tired, I laid down under the table and wanted to sleep a bit. Please, sir, don't give me away to the chef.

JUDGE (*laughing*). Oh, that'll be all right. Thomas, what have you to say to this statement ?

KARL THOMAS. That I'm gradually coming to the conclusion that I'm in a madhouse.

JUDGE. Indeed, in a madhouse ? The witnesses can go. Mrs. Meller, you are for the time being under arrest. Take her away.

(*Witness goes.*)

Bring in the prisoner Eva Berg.

(*Enter* EVA BERG.)

Your name is Eva Berg ?

EVA BERG. Hallo, Karl . . . yes.

JUDGE. You mustn't speak to the prisoner.

EVA BERG. I can't shake hands with him. You must unfasten the handcuffs. Why have you handcuffed him? Do you imagine he'll fly away? There are dozens of policemen outside. Or are you afraid of him? You don't seem to be particularly brave. Or do you merely want to cow him? They'll have a disappointment, won't they, Karl?

JUDGE. I'll have you taken away if you don't change your tone.

EVA BERG. Oh, I dare say you've courage enough for that. I'm waiting for you to let me go.

JUDGE. That I'm not authorized to do.

EVA BERG. Yes, when it suits you you hide behind the law. For weeks I've been in custody. I've already exercised all the rights which the regulations allow. As public rights imply public duties you would resign your post as examining judge rather than admit that the law has been broken in arresting me.

JUDGE. I have two questions to ask you. Did the prisoner live with you?

EVA BERG. Yes.

JUDGE. Were his relations with you of a punishable character?

EVA BERG. What a childish question! Do you belong to the fifteenth century?

JUDGE. I wish to know if you had sexual relations with the prisoner.

EVA BERG. Will you first tell me what unsexual union is?

JUDGE. You come of a respectable family. Your father was . . .

EVA BERG. My family is nothing to do with you. And I consider your questions so indecent that I should be ashamed of myself if I attempted to answer them.

JUDGE. Do you refer to the second question?—When the prisoner was living with you, did he express the intention of murdering the Prime Minister, Mr. Kilman?

EVA BERG. I think we've got each other taped, Mr. Examining Judge, if you'd only care to recognize the fact. Wouldn't you consider that a man who betrayed a friend or a comrade was a pretty low-down rotter? Therefore, your third question is also indecent, because you apparently believe in the possibility of my answering it. However, I swear, on my honour, which you can neither give me nor take away from me, that Karl Thomas never expressed the intention of murdering Kilman.

JUDGE. Thank you. Take her away.

EVA BERG. Good-bye, Karl. Don't give way.

KARL THOMAS. I love you, Eva.

EVA BERG. Even at a moment like this, I mustn't lie to you.

(EVA BERG *is led away.*)

JUDGE. I've learned from your papers that you were eight years in a lunatic asylum. In order to establish whether you are responsible for your actions, you will be handed over to the Department of Psychiatry.

BLACK OUT

(THE FAÇADE *changes to that of the* LUNATIC ASYLUM.)

LIGHT ON

ENQUIRY OFFICE

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. You have been passed on to me by the Public Prosecutor for a psychiatrical examination. Remain standing. Pulse normal. Open your shirt. Breathe deeply. Hold it. Heart healthy. Tell me honestly, why did you do this thing?

KARL THOMAS. I did not shoot him.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN (*turns over pages of document*). At first the police took you for a man who had fired the shots on Nationalistic grounds. They thought that a certain Pickel was your accomplice. The Court of Enquiry came to the conclusion that this was a false hypothesis. They then decided that you belonged to an extreme radical, terroristic union. Your political comrades have been arrested. For my part I . . . you can trust me . . . I am only interested in your motives.

KARL THOMAS. I can confess nothing as I am not the murderer.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. You wanted to be revenged, I suppose? Probably you believed that the Minister would give you a better position. You saw that your gentleman comrades, once they sit aloft, are only concerned with feathering their own nests. You were disillusioned? The world didn't live up to your picture of it?

KARL THOMAS. I don't need a psychiatrist.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. You feel quite healthy?

KARL THOMAS. Absolutely.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Hm. You've always had that notion? I seem to remember that your mother suffered from the same complex.

(KARL THOMAS *laughs.*)

Don't laugh. Nobody is *absolutely* healthy.

(*Short pause.*)

KARL THOMAS. Professor!

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Will you confess now why you shot? Remember, it's only the WHY which interests me. The deed is not my business. Deeds are unimportant. Only motives are important.

KARL THOMAS. I will tell you everything exactly, Professor. I can't hold out any longer. What I have experienced . . . May I tell you, Professor?

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Go on.

KARL THOMAS. I must have clarity. The door closed behind me, and when I opened it again, eight years had gone. A century. First of all I went to see Wilhelm Kilman, as you advised me. Condemned to death, as I was. I beheld him as Prime Minister. Hob-nobbing with his former enemies.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Normal! He was more cunning than you.

KARL THOMAS. I went to my best comrade—a chap who once,

with a revolver in his hand, drove back a whole company of Whites. I heard him say: "One must learn how to wait."

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Normal.

KARL THOMAS. And he swore, moreover, that he had remained true to the Revolution.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Abnormal. But not your failing. He ought to have been examined. Probably a mild dementia præcox in catatonic form.

KARL THOMAS. I was a waiter. For a whole evening. It stank of corruption. The staff considered it all in order and were proud of it.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Normal. Business is flourishing again. Everybody profits by it in his own way.

KARL THOMAS. Do you regard that as normal? In the hotel I met a financier. They tell me he gathers in gold like hay. What does he get out of it? He can't even fill his belly with delicacies. When the others stuffed themselves with pheasant, he had to lap up soup because his stomach was tender. Night and day he speculates. Why? To what end?

(*In the background, the* PRIVATE ROOM *in the hotel is lit up.*)

FINANCIER (*telephoning*). Hallo, hallo! Stock Exchange? Sell everything. Colours, Potash, Tubes . . . The assassination of Kilman. Chemical Factory shares already fallen 100 per cent. What? Exchange, why did you cut me off? I'll have you arrested! Ruined through a telephone interruption. Good God!

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. To what end? Because he is a smart man and wishes to achieve something. My dear chap, that financier you saw —I wish I had his capacity—was normal.

FINANCIER (*grinning in the hotel room*). Normal, normal!

(PRIVATE ROOM *becomes dark.*)

KARL THOMAS. And the porter at the Grand Hotel? For twelve years he saved half a sovereign regularly. Twelve years! Then came the inflation. They paid him out 700 million marks, and from the whole of his savings he couldn't buy as much as a box of matches. But that didn't cure him. He thinks the whole swindle is unalterable. To-day he saves the crumbs that fall from his mouth and backs horses with his last farthing. Is that normal?

(*In the background, the* STAFF'S ROOM *at* HOTEL.)

PORTER. Who's won at the Paris races? The Lovely Galathean. What a fraud! I put my savings on Idealist, and the damned jockey went and broke his neck. I'll have my stakes back, or else . . .

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Nothing venture, nothing win. The porter at the Grand Hotel—I've stayed there myself—is absolutely normal.

PORTER (*in hotel room, stabbing himself with knife*). Normal, normal!

HOTEL BLACKED OUT

KARL THOMAS. Perhaps you call a world normal in which it is possible for the most important discoveries to be destroyed, simply because somebody or other is afraid that he won't be able to make so much money—discoveries which were designed to make life easier for mankind?

(*In the background, the Wireless Station is lit up.*)

OPERATOR. Attention, attention! All wireless stations of the world! Who will buy my invention? I don't want money. The invention will help everybody, everybody. Silence . . . No answer . . .

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. What is there abnormal in that? The world isn't a pleasant meadow in which men play ring-a-ring-o'-roses and tootle on the pipes of peace. Life is battle. He who strikes the hardest blow wins. That is absolutely normal.

OPERATOR (*in hotel, grinning as he makes a short circuit*). Normal, normal!

(*All the hotel rooms are lit up.*)

CHORUS OF VISITORS (*leaning down towards the Enquiry Office and grinning mockingly*). Normal, normal!

(*Explosion in hotel.*)

BLACK OUT IN BACKGROUND

KARL THOMAS. How could I have borne such a world any longer? I conceived a plan to stir up mankind. I wished to shoot the Prime Minister. At the same moment somebody else shot him.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Hm.

KARL THOMAS. I ran after the assassin. Thought it was a comrade and wanted to help him. He repulsed me. I saw his tight lips! Because the Minister was a Bolshevik, a revolutionary—he screamed at me.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Normal! Or it would be so if this unknown person existed.

KARL THOMAS. Then I shot at the very man who had murdered the man I wanted to murder.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Hm.

KARL THOMAS. The fog cleared. Perhaps the world is not mad. Perhaps I am mad. Perhaps I am . . . Perhaps it is all a bewildering dream . . .

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. What is it you want? The world is what it is. Let's get back to motives. Did you hope to shake off your past with this shot?

KARL THOMAS. Madness! Madness!

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. No comedy-acting, please! You can't take in an old psychiatrist like me in that way.

KARL THOMAS. Or perhaps there's no distinction between the world and a madhouse nowadays. Yes, yes . . . really . . . The same men as are here under observation as lunatics are strutting about outside as normal, trampling down the others.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Oh, please . . .

KARL THOMAS. And you! Do you imagine yourself normal too? You're a madman among madmen.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Enough of these catch-phrases, or I'll have you put in an isolation cell. I suppose you hope to save yourself by dishing up advertisements addressed to the mentally afflicted?

KARL THOMAS. Do you fancy you're alive? Just imagine the world remaining as it is at present!

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. So you have not changed. . . . You still want to transform the world, start a little trail of gunpowder? If nature had not intended that some should eat less than others there would have been no poverty. Whoever is capable of achieving something needn't go hungry.

KARL THOMAS. He who is hungry, does not need to eat!

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. With ideas like yours men would become parasites and slackers.

KARL THOMAS. Are you happy with your own ideas?

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. Happy? You over-estimate the value of happiness. Chimera! Phobia! The happiness notion lodges in your head like a cobweb. If you think it worth while cultivating for its own sake, you're welcome to do so. No doubt you will write lyrical poems, full of soul, blue violets and beauteous maidens . . . or you'll become a harmless adherent of some religious sect and suffer from mild paraphrania phantastica. But you want to make the world happy.

KARL THOMAS. I don't give a damn about your soul.

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. You undermine every community. What do you want? To uproot the very basis of life, to create heaven on earth, attain the Absolute, eh? A mad idea. You act like a corrosive poison on the poor in spirit, on the masses.

KARL THOMAS. What do you know about the masses?

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. My collection of specimens opens the blindest of eyes. The masses—a herd of swine. Force their way to the food-trough when there's anything to eat. Wallow in muck when their bellies are full. And in every century a psychopath appears to the herd and proclaims a paradise. The police ought to take them forthwith to a doctor for the insane instead of looking on and letting them run amok among mankind.

KARL THOMAS. No, you are not harmless . . .

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. It is our mission to protect society against anti-social criminals. They are the arch-enemy of every civilization. Chaos! They must be made innocuous, sterilized, stamped out.

KARL THOMAS. Warders! Warders!

(WARDERS *come in.*)

Lock up this madman in the isolation cell.

(PROFESSOR LÜDIN *makes a sign.* WARDERS *seize* KARL THOMAS.)

PROFESSOR LÜDIN. To-morrow you will be sent back to prison.

CURTAIN

ACT FIVE

SCENE I

PRISON

(*For a moment all the cells are visible.*)

BLACK OUT

THEN LIGHT ON

ALBERT KROLL'S CELL

ALBERT KROLL (*knocks on wall*). Who is there?

LIGHT ON

EVA BERG'S CELL

EVA BERG (*knocks*). Eva Berg.
ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). You too.
EVA BERG (*knocks*). Early to-day.
ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). And the others?
EVA BERG (*knocks*). All arrested. Why did Karl do it?
ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). He says he didn't. Where is Karl?
EVA BERG (*knocks*). Perhaps Mother Meller knows.
ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). Mother Meller? Is she here too?
EVA BERG (*knocks*). Yes. Above me. Wait. I'll knock.

(*Noise at* ALBERT KROLL'S *door.*)

ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). Take care. Somebody's coming.

(*Cell door creaks open. Enter* WARDER RAND.)

RAND. Soup. Be quick. To-day is Sunday.
ALBERT KROLL. Oh, it's you.
RAND. Yes, prison officer again. It's something firm under a chap's feet. . . . So I've got you all together again. Except Kilman. They're uncovering the memorial to him to-day.
ALBERT KROLL. Oh, indeed.
RAND. Kilman was the only one among you who pulled anything off, you'll admit that, I suppose. I've always maintained that.
ALBERT KROLL (*eating*). Muck!
RAND. Isn't the soup to your liking? They give you roast pork at Christmas. Be patient till then.
ALBERT KROLL. I say, is Karl Thomas here too?

RAND. Yes, since yesterday. What a life that chap's got behind him!

(WARDER RAND *goes*.)

ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). Now, Eva!
EVA BERG (*knocks*). Where is Karl?
KNOCKING EVERYWHERE. Where is Karl?

CELLS BLACKED OUT

LIGHT ON

KARL THOMAS'S CELL

KARL THOMAS. Waiting again, waiting, waiting. . . .

LIGHT ON

MRS. MELLER'S CELL

MRS. MELLER (*knocks*). Where is Karl?
KARL THOMAS (*knocks*). Here. Who are you?
MRS. MELLER. Mother Meller.
KARL THOMAS. What! Old Mother Meller? (*Knocks*.) Who else is here?
MRS. MELLER (*knocks*). All of us—Eva—Albert—and the others. On account of the assassination. . . . We're with you, dear boy.
KARL THOMAS (*knocks*). Do you know . . . eight years ago?
MRS. MELLER (*knocks*). I don't understand what you've done—but I'll stick to you.

MRS. MELLER'S CELL BLACKED OUT

KARL THOMAS (*knocks*). Listen.

LIGHT ON

PRISONER N'S CELL

PRISONER N. (*knocks*). Not so loud. Remember the rules. . . . You'll get us into trouble . . .
KARL THOMAS (*knocks*). Who are you?
PRISONER N. If you go on doing this there'll be no hope for us. I won't answer any more.

PRISONER N'S CELL BLACKED OUT

KARL THOMAS. Ah, it's you. . . . You're here again? I thought you were dead! . . . Are they all here again? All here again. Is that really so? The dance is beginning all over again? Waiting once more—waiting, waiting . . . I can't. Don't you see? What is it that drives you on? Have done with it all! Nobody hears, nobody hears. Nobody. We speak and do not hear one another . . . We hate and do not see one another. . . . We love and do not know one another. We murder but are unaware of one another. Must it always

be so—always ? You there, shall I never understand you ? No ! No ! No ! Why do you burn and destroy and lay waste the earth ? To forget everything ? Everything to no purpose ! Go on riding on your merry-go-rounds ! Dance, laugh, weep, beget. Enjoy yourselves ! *I* jump off . . .

O, madness of the world !
Whither ? Whither ?

The stone walls press in closer and closer . . . I am cold and it is dark . . . and the ice-cold wind of the gloom blows mercilessly about me . . . Whither ? Whither ? To the highest mountain. . . . To the highest tree . . . The Flood . . .

(KARL THOMAS *tears a strip of bed sheet, gets on to stool, fastens the strip to the door-hook.*)

BLACK OUT

SCENE II

CROWD IN FRONT OF VEILED MEMORIAL

COUNT LANDE. And thus I pass into the people's keeping this memorial dedicated to a worthy man, who in a difficult hour . . .

BLACK OUT

SCENE III

PRISON

LIGHT ON

ALBERT KROLL'S CELL

(*Noises. Door creaks open.* WARDER RAND *comes in.*)

RAND. As you once did me a good turn, I'll tell you something.
ALBERT KROLL. You needn't.
RAND. Oh, we're not so bad. The Criminal Court has just telephoned, Thomas is not the murderer. They've got the right man in Switzerland. A student. Just as they were about to arrest him, he shot himself.
ALBERT KROLL. Shall we be released at once ?
RAND. Not to-day. To-day is Sunday. I congratulate you, Mr. Kroll.

(RAND *goes.*)

ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). Eva, Eva !

LIGHT ON

EVA BERG'S CELL

EVA BERG (*knocks*). Yes.

ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). We're free! Rand told me. The real murderer is found.

EVA BERG. Glory! (*Knocks other wall.*) Mother Meller!

LIGHT ON

MRS. MELLER'S CELL

MRS. MELLER (*knocks*). Yes.

EVA BERG (*knocks*). We're all going to be released. Karl didn't shoot. They've got the murderer.

MRS. MELLER (*knocks other wall*). Here, Karl . . . Karl . . . Karl . . . dear Karl . . . (*Knocks on floor.*) Eva, Karl makes no sign.

EVA BERG (*knocks*). Knock louder.

MRS. MELLER (*knocks*). Karl! Karl! Karl!

EVA BERG (*knocks*). Albert, Karl doesn't answer.

ALBERT KROLL (*knocks*). Let's all knock. It makes no difference now.

(*Knocks. The other* PRISONERS *knock too. Silence. Knocks throughout the prison. Silence.*)

EVA BERG. He makes no sign.

(*In the corridors the* WARDERS *run about. Darkness in the cells. Darkness in the prison.*)

THE SCENE CLOSES

THE BLIND GODDESS

A Play in Five Acts, translated by
EDWARD CRANKSHAW

CHARACTERS

DR. FRANZ FÄRBER
WAX MODEL (BETTY FÄRBER, his wife)
LORE FÄRBER (Färber's child)
ANNA GERST (Färber's secretary)
MARIE HACKER (the Färbers' maid-servant)
MAX FRANKE (Clerk to the District Council; later Councillor)
PFLASTERER (smallholder)
SECOND SMALLHOLDER
BLASENKLEFFER (gendarme)

PRESIDENT OF THE COURT
PROSECUTING COUNSEL
DEFENDING COUNSEL
PATHOLOGIST
FIRST JURYMAN
SECOND JURYMAN
THIRD JURYMAN
FOURTH JURYMAN
FIFTH JURYMAN
SIXTH JURYMAN
SEVENTH JURYMAN
FIRST WOMAN PRISONER
SECOND WOMAN PRISONER
THIRD WOMAN PRISONER
FOURTH WOMAN PRISONER
MALE PRISONER
WARDER
WARDRESS
OFFICIAL
POSTMAN'S WIFE
SCHOOLMASTER
BANDMASTER
GYPSY
PEOPLE, CHILDREN, VOICES, ETC.

Time : The Present Day

THE BLIND GODDESS

ACT ONE

The Hall of a small middle-class House in the Country. It is used as a living-room, although the front door opens out of it. At the far end there are two doors.

PFLASTERER. My old grandfather says there hasn't been a drought like this for sixty years.

MARIE (*tidying up*). It's no good expecting the doctor in yet awhile.

PFLASTERER. The corn's dying of thirst in the fields. Just like you or me would. You can see it with your own eyes panting for water.

MARIE. I can make an appointment for you, Herr Pflasterer.

PFLASTERER. We've got to have some rain.

MARIE. I expect the sky's as deaf as you seem to be, Herr Pflasterer.

PFLASTERER. In the old days when it was hot and sultry there was always a storm come up, and the corn got what it wanted. Rain. But nowadays the clouds clear off as soon as you look at them. There's no sense in anything these days—no sense in man nor God.

MARIE. Nor in your hanging about here either! I suppose it's your wife you've come about. Have you been knocking her about again?

PFLASTERER. It's not the old woman. She got better soon enough. Three days of yelling, three weeks of pestering me, and three months of general devilment. No, it's the cow I've come about. She's got the colic, and last time the doctor did her good.

MARIE. Oh, you sly old fox! You miserable old miser! You'd rather your old woman passed out than that cow. So that's why you're here.

PFLASTERER. Can a cow talk? Can a cow grumble? That's all you women ever do. And the poor cow stands all straddled in the stable and sweats with pain and stares at you with her eyes bursting out so that God Himself must pity her. (*He starts making up to her.*)

MARIE. Hands off! None of that, Herr Pflasterer, or I'll give you such a clout that the doctor himself won't know what to do about it.

ANNA (*comes through the left-hand door at the back*). Marie, have you no consideration for the sick?

PFLASTERER. I've come about my missus.

MARIE. He's come about the cow!

ANNA. When the doctor comes home I'll make an appointment for you. It's no good waiting.

PFLASTERER. And how is Frau Färber ?

ANNA. She's getting on quite nicely, thank you . . . better . . .

PFLASTERER. Well, I suppose I'd better go.

ANNA. Good evening.

(PFLASTERER *goes off.*)

Can't you find the doctor anywhere ?

MARIE. No, Fräulein. He wasn't at the inn either.

ANNA. Have you told anybody why we want him ?

MARIE. I wouldn't do that. You told me not to.

ANNA. It only gives rise to talk—to gossip . . . Is the child asleep ?

MARIE. No. You'll have to say good night to her first.

ANNA. I ? Doesn't she want her mother ?

MARIE. No. She's afraid of her.

ANNA. She ought to cure the child of that.

MARIE. Frau Färber refuses to see her.

ANNA. Nonsense.

MARIE. It's because of you.

ANNA. Because of me ?

MARIE. She's seen how the child always turns to you. Yesterday she pushed Lore away, and when she went out of the room she was crying.

ANNA. Lore ?

MARIE. No, she was only too glad to get away from her mother. It's all very sad.

ANNA. I must talk to Lore.

MARIE. I know what's the matter with Frau Färber. She's got a broken heart. Any fool can see that.

ANNA. Stop talking nonsense, Marie. Have you done the shopping for to-morrow ?

MARIE. No, Fräulein.

ANNA. Here's the money, then. (*She puts some money on the table.*) You'd better go at once, or the shops will all be shut.

(*Somebody is heard playing a mouth-organ outside.* ANNA *goes through the left-hand door, which she leaves ajar.*)

ANNA'S VOICE. Frau Färber, answer me ! Frau Färber ! Answer me ! Betty ! Betty !

(MARIE, *tidying up, hums softly a sentimental song.* MAX *enters, and covers her eyes with his hands.*)

MAX. Who is it ?

MARIE. Easy come and easy go, that's who it is.

MAX. Someone that lies easiest when he lies heaviest. . . . Is he so very bad ?

MARIE. Not so loud . . . the mistress . . . Wait until I shut the door. (*She shuts it.*)

MAX (*seeing the money on the table quietly puts it into his pocket*). She's better, isn't she?

MARIE. I don't know.

MAX. Who does know then?

MARIE. I mustn't talk about her.

MAX. Oh, and who says that?

MARIE. Fräulein Gerst.

MAX. Queer. . . . You've a nice pair of breasts on you! Very meaty!

MARIE. There's a reason for everything.

MAX. Don't be so clever.

MARIE. Clever? I'm a damned fool. I thought *you* were cleverer, though.

MAX. What are you getting at?

MARIE. I'm going to have a baby.

(MAX *plays his mouth-organ.*)

That's what you do to all of us—and then you just play your mouth-organ.

MAX. Listen to what I'm playing. Funeral march. We'll give the pretty child a first-class burial. Stop whimpering, you silly fool. All that fuss about a mucky little vegetable. And only the first month too.

MARIE. It's the second!

MAX. As you like—first or second. And you call that a baby? It's an abortion. I've seen things like that at the Christmas fair, bottled in spirits. Turned my stomach. We'll have you up to town where they run them off by the thousand. I wish to God you could pay for your love cash down instead of afterwards. What's the fun of it?

(*A* GYPSY WOMAN *comes in at the open door.*)

MARIE. The doctor is not in.

GYPSY. Tell your fortune, pretty lady? Show me your hand and I'll tell you the past and the future. Whether your lover is faithful and what's coming to you.

MARIE. I know what is coming to me without your telling me! Go away!

MAX. And I must go, too. Good-bye, Marie. Come on, you black devil.

(MAX *and* GYPSY *go off.*)

ANNA (*coming in*). Have you done the shopping, Marie?

MARIE. No, I'm just going.

ANNA. What are you looking for?

MARIE. The money's gone.

ANNA. What do you mean, "the money's gone"?

MARIE. That dirty old beast!

ANNA. Pflasterer ?

MARIE. That gypsy ! I'll go for the police at once. . . . Just wait till I catch her !

(*She goes.*)

ANNA (*looking out of the window*). Oh, if only I knew where he was ! . . . At last ! . . . Franz !—— Franz !—— Quickly !

FÄRBER (*off*). Coming . . .

ANNA. Your wife—I think it's serious.

FÄRBER. It can't be anything much. Has she a temperature ?

ANNA. Franz—she is . . .

FÄRBER. What is it ? Tell me.

ANNA (*opening the left-hand door*). I've been trying to get you all the afternoon. She's been lying there for nearly half an hour. Just like that. She doesn't answer when I speak to her. She hasn't moved at all. She feels quite cold. Her lips are blue. Her eyes . . .

(DR. FÄRBER *goes into the room leaving the door wide open behind him. Through the door the motionless figure of* BETTY FÄRBER *can be seen lying on the bed.*)

FÄRBER. Good God ! . . . Stethoscope . . . no sound . . . flash-light . . . no reflex . . . quickly—caffein—camphor . . . in my bag —a syringe . . . wadding . . . alcohol . . . two-inch needle . . . adrenalin, in the medicine cupboard . . . don't mix the bottles . . . not a trace of breathing . . . have you charged the syringe ? . . . hold her arm . . . that's no good . . . loosen her collar—uncover her breast . . . did you see her blink ? . . . Stethoscope . . . nothing . . . uncover her breast. . . . We must give her heart an injection.

MARIE (*who has returned meanwhile*). Her heart ?

FÄRBER. What are you doing here, Marie ? Get back into the kitchen.

MARIE. The policeman's coming.

FÄRBER. Policeman ?

MARIE. About the money—I was going shopping, and the . . .

ANNA. A gypsy stole her money.

FÄRBER. I see. I see. Now go away.

(MARIE *goes off.*)

ANNA. What is it ?

FÄRBER. Nothing. She's dead.

(ANNA *cries out.*)

It's frightful. . . . But how could we have expected a collapse ?

MARIE (*enters*). Did you call ?

FÄRBER. My wife is dead, Marie.

MARIE. Jesus !

FÄRBER. Yes. . . . Now go to bed. You can't help us now.

. . . And to-morrow there will be plenty to do. . . . Good night. . . . Do you want anything ?

MARIE. I'm frightened, sir. I can't sleep here—with a body in the house.

FÄRBER. Don't be childish, Marie. How can it hurt you ? Good night.

(MARIE *goes. There is a pause.*)

ANNA. Franz . . .

FÄRBER. Anna . . .

ANNA. It's no good pretending . . . no . . . she was not good . . . But—she was your wife.

FÄRBER. When I first met her, at a dancing-class, she was sixteen and I was in my first year at college. We danced together without her saying a word. I thought to myself—you conceited young fool ! Your father has money, and I have none ; is that any reason for insulting me ? When the ladies' dance came she chose me. I could hardly speak. I was so excited, and I knew I loved her. We got engaged that very evening. Four years later I took my finals and we were married. Actually . . .

ANNA. Actually ?

FÄRBER. Well, by that time I'd fallen out of love with her. But her people had helped me buy my practice, and it was too late to turn back. Even on our honeymoon she started finding fault with me. Nothing I did was right ; everything was wrong. Even in front of my patients she nagged me. Then the child came. And it was worse than ever. And then you came.

ANNA. She knew long before I did how things would go with us.

FÄRBER. Even when you were still resisting she knew everything.

ANNA. She never said a word right up to the last.

FÄRBER. Because she was afraid of having to decide.

ANNA. And that would have shattered her ?

FÄRBER. Irrevocably.

ANNA. Even if I had not come back after I'd gone away that time ?

FÄRBER. Why did you go ?

ANNA. Because her hatred was making me ill. Because your weakness was killing me.

FÄRBER. But it didn't kill you ; you are alive. And you belong to me, eternally.

ANNA. I've no illusions, Franz. You'd have never decided if she'd lived.

FÄRBER. Didn't I tell her everything ?

ANNA. Because she drove you into a corner, and you couldn't conceal it any more.

FÄRBER. Anna !

ANNA. You may possess a woman ; but she must make no demands on you. You like to feel that a woman belongs to you ; but at the same time you like to feel free and without responsibility.

FÄRBER. You don't believe in me?

ANNA. I don't believe you're capable of love.

FÄRBER. You must believe in me, Anna! I'll work, I'll make you rich; and we'll get away from here; we'll leave this beastly place and settle down in town.

ANNA. Why did you refuse to help Frau Wagner when she was ill?

FÄRBER. I don't know—what do you mean?

ANNA. You wouldn't help her because she was poor and could not pay. What makes you so mean? Why are you so obsessed with money?

FÄRBER. Because I was poor myself once. Because I've known what it is to starve; to be trampled underfoot by everyone with money. Because money buys everything to-day—success, and confidence, and trust.

ANNA. If anybody came here to-morrow—a stranger—and tried to poison your mind against me, you would cheerfully abandon me.

FÄRBER. And you say you love him—this weak, mean, despicable parody of a man!

ANNA. Yes, I love him in spite of everything. Do you hear that? I love you! Oh, Franz . . .

FÄRBER. Anna . . . (*He tries to kiss her.*)

ANNA. No—don't kiss me. Not here. When I look at her she seems to be staring back at us. . . . There! She moved!

FÄRBER. It's only the light. I'd better shut the door. (*He does so. At the right-hand door.*) Is anyone there? (*He opens it.*) You, Marie? Listening at the door? For the last time of telling, go to bed. Quietly, quietly, or you'll wake the child. (*He closes the door.*) And now I must make out the death certificate. Or perhaps I'd better have the district officer round. (*He goes to the telephone and lifts the receiver.*) 232 . . . Hallo! . . . Is that the district officer? Dr. Färber speaking. . . . Can you come round at once? My wife has just died. Thanks. . . . Gastro enteritis. No, she didn't seem at all bad when I went out this morning. I've worse cases on hand this very moment. The usual treatment—panthopon, sylichlosis. . . . How could I know? . . . Very well, I'll expect you. (*He replaces the receiver.*) He'll be round in half an hour. Anna, come outside. It's so hot in here, so hot.

(*They both go off.* MARIE *comes in fearfully, and goes to the window. Someone whistles outside.*)

MARIE. Max! Max!

MAX (*coming in*). Are you alone?

MARIE. The mistress is dead!

MAX. She's been very quick about it.

MARIE. There's something going on in this house.

MAX. Idiot! We all of us die one day. Up to-day and down to-morrow.

MARIE. Put your arms round me, Max. I'm cold. Mother always

says the dead suck away the warmth of the living. There! What was that?

MAX. What's the matter with you? You're all of a tremble.

MARIE. Max . . .

MAX. Well?

MARIE. He stuck a needle into her heart!

MAX. Don't be a fool.

MARIE. I saw it with my own eyes. I heard him too.

MAX. What did you hear?

MARIE. I heard him say to Anna, "It's no good—I'll stick the needle into her heart."

MAX. You've been dreaming.

MARIE. And I'm dreaming about this brat too, I suppose!

MAX. Good God—the poor old girl!

MARIE. I can't look him in the face any more.

MAX. We'll make it hot for him.

MARIE. With a needle . . . his own wife.

MAX. You must tell the police at once.

MARIE. Do you think I should?

MAX. What else? We must look sharp about it. Something going on indeed!

(MAX *puts out the light, and it is dusk.* BLASENKLEFFER, *the village gendarme, comes in.*)

MARIE (*shrieking*). Jesus! It's the corpse!

(*They both try to get away through the door.*)

BLASENKLEFFER. Stop, or I fire!

MAX. That's no corpse talking. Stay where you are, Marie.

BLASENKLEFFER. I've got you, you dirty old gypsy! So you go stealing by night too, do you?

MAX. She'll steal in the daytime if you'd rather.

BLASENKLEFFER. Who's that?

MAX. Me, Max Franke.

BLASENKLEFFER. There's no call for you to talk. I'm the one that does the talking here. I'll do all the talking that's necessary. Don't you dare move an inch now.

MAX. Shall I turn the light up, officer? You should never shoot in the dark. You might hit somebody.

BLASENKLEFFER. Are you trying to insult me?

MAX. It was a compliment.

BLASENKLEFFER. What are you doing here, anyway? It looks suspicious! Turn up that light. But keep quiet. If anybody's going to do any talking here, it's the law.

MAX (*turning up the light*). Good evening, officer.

BLASENKLEFFER. Where's that gypsy?

MAX. What gypsy?

BLASENKLEFFER. The one that pinched the money?

MAX. Oh, her! Here, Marie, come and say your stuff.

MARIE. Oh, sir—there's something . . .

MAX. There's something she's got to tell you about . . .

BLASENKLEFFER. You're an artful one. We know all about you. We know all about everything. We don't need you and your like here. If you hadn't had Dr. Färber to speak for you you'd have gone begging. You know that as well as I do. Clerk to the Council, indeed!

MAX. Listen a moment, I want to . . .

BLASENKLEFFER. What do you want, eh? Well, shut up! Hold your tongue! Marie, what time was the money taken?

MARIE. Round about eight o'clock.

BLASENKLEFFER. We'll call it half-past.

MARIE. Round about eight isn't half-past eight.

MAX. Look here, it's nothing to do with . . .

BLASENKLEFFER. I'll tell you what it has to do with, thank you. I want none of your lip. Where was the money?

MARIE. Here, on this table. Ten marks.

BLASENKLEFFER. Who was here besides the gypsy?

MARIE. Fräulein Gerst.

BLASENKLEFFER. But it was her money, so that rules her out. Anybody else?

MARIE (*hesitating*). Nobody.

MAX. I was.

BLASENKLEFFER. Wait a minute, wait a minute. The gentleman himself. That looks suspicious.

MAX. I'll trouble you to stop being a fool!

BLASENKLEFFER. You'll have to prove an alibi.

MAX. Alibi? What the hell do I want an alibi for? Anyway, you ask your wife. I've come straight from her.

BLASENKLEFFER. What business have you with my wife?

MAX (*ironically*). Oh, just a matter of my laundry bill. I told her I hadn't any cash, but she said she'd trust me.

BLASENKLEFFER. I'll kick you out if ever I find you in my house.

MAX. Well, how's that for an alibi? Write it down in your little black book. The suspicious Max Franke cites Frau Blasenkleffer in support of his alibi.

BLASENKLEFFER. Who's calling you suspicious? Can't you understand a joke when you hear one?

MAX. All I can see is that you're damned insolent! Alibi!

MARIE. Max—not so loud—with a corpse in the next room.

BLASENKLEFFER. With what in the next room? What's this? What's this?

MAX. When you let us get a word in edgeways we'll tell you. The doctor's wife is dead.

BLASENKLEFFER. What, her that's so young and all? Why, I am sorry to hear it.

MAX. As you say. But not everybody in this house is sorry to hear it. You should ask them!

BLASENKLEFFER. Are you talking to me officially?

MAX. Just as one friend to another. I'm no enemy of yours; that's all your imagination. As for your wife—forget it! The women are always coming in between honest men. The whole point is this: do you want to wear yourself out in a hole like this? If not now's your chance for promotion. Now's your chance to show what you're made of!

BLASENKLEFFER. There you go again.

MAX. Any fool can see there's something a bit fishy about this.

BLASENKLEFFER. You mean she didn't die natural?

MAX. Everybody knows there's been something going on between Dr. Färber and his lady secretary.

MARIE. He goes to her room, every night.

BLASENKLEFFER. Adultery!

MAX. He's no more morals than a dog—taking a whore into his own house!

BLASENKLEFFER. What next, eh?

MAX. That depends on you. He'll marry her—unless you, the arm of the law, take the trouble to bring the crime to light.

BLASENKLEFFER. I don't understand all this.

MAX. Use your eyes, man. Then you will.

BLASENKLEFFER. What are you trying to say?

MAX. Use your ears. Then perhaps you'll hear.

BLASENKLEFFER. Come on. Out with it.

MAX. You'd better tell him, Marie.

MARIE. He stuck a needle into her heart.

BLASENKLEFFER. Heavens above!

MAX. And while she lay dying that whore, that Gerst woman, forbade Marie to answer any questions about Frau Färber. Is that suspicious or isn't it?

BLASENKLEFFER. Are you prepared to make a sworn statement in a court of law?

MARIE. Aren't I just!

FÄRBER (*enters*). Has the district officer come yet?

MARIE. No.

(FÄRBER *begins to go off through the left-hand door.*)

BLASENKLEFFER. In the name of the Law I forbid anybody to enter that room.

FÄRBER. May I ask why?

BLASENKLEFFER. No, you may not.

ANNA (*coming in*). What's the matter, Franz?

BLASENKLEFFER. You keep quiet!

ANNA. What have I done to be treated like this? Why can't I speak to Dr. Färber? Leave me alone!

BLASENKLEFFER. Silence, I tell you!

FÄRBER. It's all right, Anna. We'll soon clear things up.

ACT TWO

Scene I

Darkness.

A Wireless Loud Speaker. This is the first general news bulletin ; copyright reserved. Early this morning, after a period of tense expectancy, the trial was opened of Dr. Franz Färber and Anna Gerst. The accused are charged with the wilful murder, by poisoning, of Frau Färber. The post-mortem examination of the dead woman revealed considerable quantities of arsenic in all the organs . . .

Light.

Before the Curtain.

Policeman. Stand back there ! Full up ! Full up ! Stand back there ! It's no good pushing ! . . . What's that ?

A Voice. Why did you let in that fat little fool with the pork-pie hat ?

Second Voice. Favouritism !

Policeman. Favouritism ! You'd better watch your step, my lad ! You be careful what you're saying or you'll find yourself in the lock-up !

First Feminine Voice. Where did you get special pass from ?

Second Feminine Voice. I know the chief clerk of one of the lawyers—him that's defending. And he said to me, Fräulein, if you'll go bathing with me on Sunday I'll get you a front seat at the trial.

First Feminine Voice. You're a lucky one, aren't you ! What does he look like ?—Färber, I mean ?

Second Feminine Voice. He's a fine-looking fellow. I'm sorry for him.

First Feminine Voice. And the girl ?

Second Feminine Voice. Well, how does a murderess generally look ?

Curtain *goes up.*

The Court Room.

The President of the Court. It is a fact that on the day of her death you gave your wife an adrenalin injection to stimulate the heart ?

Färber. Any doctor in my place would have done the same thing. Is there anything particularly suspicious about that ?

President. I fail to see why the question should upset you.

FÄRBER. Because of the ridiculous things my neighbours have been saying about me.

PRESIDENT. Am I right in believing that your wife was always very anæmic ?

FÄRBER. Yes.

PRESIDENT. Did you never give her the usual treatment . . . arsenic ?

FÄRBER. No, never. Never.

PRESIDENT. Why do you stress the " never " so violently ?

FÄRBER. I did not stress it. For months now you have been cross-questioning me, first at the inquiry, now here ; sometimes nine or ten hours a day. There seems to be no end to it all. I can't go on with it. I can't sleep at night. I shall go mad. I demand my freedom. How often must I repeat that I am not guilty ?

PRESIDENT. I too must sit here all day as well as you. But let us be reasonable. Wouldn't it ease your conscience very much to make a public confession ?

FÄRBER. What should I confess when I have nothing to confess ? The onus is on you to prove my guilt—if you still don't believe what I have said a thousand times during these last months : that I am not guilty.

PRESIDENT. Very well. Counsel for the Prosecution !

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. The State Pathologist has certified that poison was found in considerable quantities in the body of your wife. There were also traces of arsenic in the hair. You, as a doctor, are doubtless aware of the significance of this ?

FÄRBER. I swear I have never . . .

PRESIDENT. Please remember that you are on trial ; you are not a witness. Answer the question as it was put. Do you know what these facts mean ?

(FÄRBER *is silent.*)

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. The accused refuses to answer. In which case I must answer for him. Frau Färber died from arsenical poisoning ; and she must have received a long series of doses until on the day of her death she received the fatal dose. This does away with any idea of suicide. A suicide does not experiment with poison ; he takes it once and for all. There can be no doubt that we are dealing with a case of murder.

PRESIDENT. Why did you, Anna Gerst, originally deny your intimate relationship with Dr. Färber ?

ANNA. I was ashamed.

PRESIDENT. You admit now that you lied ?

ANNA. Yes.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Had you any other motive for lying, besides—shame ?

ANNA. I . . . love Dr. Färber.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Are you implying that Dr. Färber com-

mitted this crime single-handed, and that you, by denying your intimacy with him, hoped to increase the suspicion against him?

ANNA. No, I am not.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Everything points in one direction. A married man is in love with another woman. His wife learns of their relationship. But, thinking of their child, she refuses to divorce her husband. And he, inevitably, ponders ways and means of removing her from his path.

ANNA. You twist my words as I utter them. You try to discover hidden motives in my simplest statements of fact. How could I suspect Franz? He is innocent.

PRESIDENT (*kindly*). Be reasonable, Fräulein Gerst. A lawyer never twists the words of the accused. It is a fact that on the day of Frau Färber's death you yourself obtained medicine from the doctor's cupboard?

ANNA. Frau Färber was unwell; and I gave her valerian.

FIRST JURYMAN. How was it that you had unhindered access to that cupboard?

ANNA. But it was only valerian.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. The bottle was not labelled poison?

ANNA. No, of course it wasn't.

PRESIDENT. There was a cupboard containing poisons next to the ordinary cupboard?

ANNA. Yes.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. You could not, by any chance, have gone to this second cupboard by accident? That sort of mistake is possible. It has been done before.

ANNA. The cupboard with the poisons was always kept locked.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. But the arsenic was in the everyday cupboard?

ANNA. I don't know anything about any arsenic.

PRESIDENT. When Frau Färber lay dying you sent the maid-servant out to look for Dr. Färber. What did you tell her?

ANNA. I don't remember.

PRESIDENT. But the maid-servant, Marie, who will appear as witness, does remember. You told her that she was not to speak to anybody about the condition of the sick woman.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Do you remember now?

ANNA. Yes, I remember now.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Now try to help us get a little further. . . . Did you tell the villager, Pflasterer, that Frau Färber was doing well on the day of her death?

ANNA. In a single day one says so many things, so many words; and the next day they are all forgotten. But the words are alive, and each one is an enemy; and I am alone, and there are so many words . . . I am not lying; I swear it. I am not lying.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Then you did actually tell Herr Pflasterer that Frau Färber was doing well?

ANNA. It is possible I did.

(ANNA *sobs.*)

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. I put it to you that you wished to prevent anybody from coming to the aid of the dying woman?

ANNA. No. No. No. I didn't know she was dying. I'd no idea. And I didn't want the neighbours to start talking. . . . What can I do? You don't believe what I say; I know. You don't believe me. If I say nothing you say she is silent because she has something to conceal. If I speak you tear my answers to shreds. Every word is a pitfall. Yes becomes no, and no becomes yes. What is the truth?

PRESIDENT. It is for your judges to find the truth . . . We will now call the witnesses. Marie Hacker!

(MARIE *is led forward, dressed in prison clothes.*)

You are Marie Hacker, aged twenty-one, domestic servant. You are now serving four years' imprisonment for abortion and for procuring abortion.

MARIE. I shan't tell you who the father was.

JUDGE. That does not concern us here. As a prisoner you will not be sworn in. You were employed as housemaid by Dr. Färber. You know the accused?

(MARIE *laughs.*)

PRESIDENT. Why are you laughing?

MARIE. I never forget anybody I meet; even if it was in the dark!

PRESIDENT. Did Fräulein Gerst approach you on the day of Frau Färber's death and forbid you to speak to anybody of her illness?

MARIE. Yes, and that wasn't all she wanted either . . .

PRESIDENT. Answer my question, please.

MARIE. Yes.

PRESIDENT. Now what is that you have to say?

MARIE. She wanted to marry the doctor.

PRESIDENT. Upon what grounds do you base that statement?

MARIE. It was common property. Frau Färber was the only one who didn't know. Many's the time I've seen the doctor come out of her room in the middle of the night. Properly stuck up she was, too; and her mother died in the poor house. Nasty hussy!

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE. I should like to suggest that the moralizings of the witness are a little out of place. She has come here not from a convent but from prison.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. The witness was not sentenced for perjury. We have no cause to doubt her honesty.

PRESIDENT. Have you any further questions?

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. I wish to put a question to the witness the answer to which will throw vivid light on the depravity of both accused. Before I put this question I should like the Court to be cleared.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I protest.

PRESIDENT (*after consultation with the* JUDGES). The application for the clearing of the Court is not allowed.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Very well. Fräulein Hacker, will you tell the Court exactly what you saw after the death of Frau Färber?

MARIE. Oh, I couldn't!

PRESIDENT. You cannot withhold relevant testimony without rendering yourself liable for punishment.

MARIE. Fräulein Gerst and the doctor . . . No. I can't say it.

PRESIDENT. There's nothing for you to be afraid of.

MARIE. They were cuddling each other.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. In the presence of the dead woman?

MARIE. Yes.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. Were you with them?

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. I object to that question.

PRESIDENT. The question is allowed. Were you with them?

MARIE. No.

PRESIDENT. Then how do you know what took place between them?

MARIE. I was standing at the door.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. You were eavesdropping?

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. This witness, having at heart the best interests of the dead woman, wished to enlighten the Court as to certain suspicious happenings in the Färber menage. In so doing she has materially served the interests of Justice.

PRESIDENT. You may leave the box.

MARIE. I can go home?

PRESIDENT. Unfortunately, no.

MARIE. I thought perhaps that my fiancé . . .

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Who is your fiancé?

MARIE. I'm not telling *you* anything!

PRESIDENT. Would you tell me, perhaps?

(MARIE *is silent.*)

The witness may leave the Court. . . . Call the next witness, Philipp Pflasterer.

(PFLASTERER *comes forward.*)

You are Philipp Pflasterer, fifty-one years of age, smallholder. Raise your right hand and repeat the oath after me . . . I swear by Almighty God——

PFLASTERER. I swear by Almighty God——

PRESIDENT. That the evidence I give to this Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth——

PFLASTERER. That the evidence I give to this Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth——

PRESIDENT. So help me God.

PFLASTERER. S'help me God.

PRESIDENT. What material evidence have you to offer?

PFLASTERER. Those two, the doctor and Anna Gerst, have blood on their hands.

PRESIDENT. What proof have you?

PFLASTERER. Proof? I've no proof.

PRESIDENT. Then what makes you think this?

PFLASTERER. Think? I don't want to think anything.

PRESIDENT. Then who does think it?

PFLASTERER. I've seen it in the papers.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. You were at Dr. Färber's house on the day of his wife's death?

PFLASTERER. That's right.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Did anything unusual strike you?

PFLASTERER. The doctor wasn't there.

PRESIDENT. Nothing besides that?

PFLASTERER. No.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. You told the investigating police that you were struck by a certain confusion in Fräulein Gerst's manner?

PFLASTERER. She always was a bit funny.

PRESIDENT. Any further questions?

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. That is all.

PRESIDENT. For the defence? (*To* PFLASTERER.) You may leave the box. Have you anything further to say?

PFLASTERER. I must ask your worship for my expenses.

PRESIDENT. You will be given the money outside.

PFLASTERER. I paid four marks for my railway ticket, two marks for food and drink; and then there's general expenses.

PRESIDENT. General expenses?

PFLASTERER. Payment for the work I haven't been able to do.

PRESIDENT. See that he is given ten marks. Does that satisfy you?

PFLASTERER. I haven't got much choice, have I?

(*He goes off.*)

PRESIDENT. Call the next witness, Max Franke.

(MAX *comes forward.*)

You are Max Franke, twenty-eight years of age, Clerk to the Council?

MAX. I am.

PRESIDENT. Raise your right hand and repeat the oath after me.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I protest against the swearing of this witness.

PRESIDENT. On what grounds?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. There is every reason to doubt his veracity.

MAX. Who're you talking to?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. This witness for the prosecution swore during the trial of Marie Hacker that he was not the father of her child; also that he had had no intimate relations with Frau Blasenkleffer, for whom Marie procured abortion.

MAX. I did!

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. The proceedings against the witness were allowed to lapse. His reputation is beyond reproach. Certain circumstances seemed to be telling against the witness, but they were satisfactorily accounted for. I feel it my duty to defend the good name of the witness from my colleague's attack.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I withdraw my protest.

MAX (*to* PROSECUTING COUNSEL). Thank you, sir. These mud-slingers can't touch me. Since the charges against me were withdrawn I've been taken back into my old position, and promoted too. What more do you want?

PRESIDENT. I think we may regard the incident as closed. Do you wish to take the oath or to affirm?

MAX. Oh, swear, of course.

PRESIDENT. Then raise your right hand and repeat after me—I swear by Almighty God——

MAX. I swear by Almighty God——

PRESIDENT. That the evidence I give to this Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth——

MAX. That the evidence I give to this Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth——

PRESIDENT. So help me God

MAX. So help me God.

PRESIDENT. What material evidence have you to offer?

MAX. That Fräulein Gerst was crazy about men and was running after the doctor. Frau Färber was as fit as I am—not a sign of illness; anybody could see that. One day when I was passing their house I heard someone screaming. Frau Färber cried out, and Fräulein Gerst cried out. And one of them shouted: "I'll pay you out; I'll have my revenge."

PRESIDENT. Who was that?

MAX. I think it was Fräulein Gerst.

ANNA. That is not true.

PRESIDENT. You must not interrupt the witness.

ANNA. I am innocent! innocent!

PRESIDENT. If you are really innocent why do you interrupt our search for truth?

ANNA. The truth. The truth. I tell the truth, and nobody will listen.

PRESIDENT. The witness is bound by oath to tell the truth.

ANNA. Your "truth" is concerned only with the shell of things; but it is in the heart that deeds are really done. And the heart is invisible, and truth is invisible; and the oath is a lie.

PRESIDENT (*to* MAX). Continue with your evidence, please.

MAX. And then I heard a blow.

PRESIDENT. You heard what?

MAX. A blow. I looked through the window, and saw the doctor striking his wife.

A FEMININE VOICE. Blackguard!

PRESIDENT. Silence! (*To* FÄRBER.) Did you ever strike your wife?

FÄRBER. Yes, but . . .

PRESIDENT. We will have the explanations later. Go on.

MAX. On the day Frau Färber died Marie told me she had been forbidden to tell anyone that things were going so badly. And in the evening, when she was dead, she told me that the doctor had injected poison into her heart, and that when the doctor saw that he'd been observed he was frightened out of his life, and came over all pale.

PRESIDENT. Any further questions? For the Defence?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I have just received an interesting piece of news. (*To* MAX.) You were involved in the insurance trial over Herr Pflasterer's cow? Did you purchase the cow before it died?

PRESIDENT. May I ask what a cow has to do with this trial?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. There's always a cow in every trial.

PRESIDENT (*to* MAX). Answer the question.

MAX. Yes, I bought the cow.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. The insurance company maintained that the purchase was not in order. You entered into an agreement with Herr Pflasterer, over-insured the cow, and then, shall we say, assisted at her premature demise.

MAX. When I bought the cow there was nothing wrong with it. Do you think I can't tell a sick cow when I see one? She was a rare animal, your lordship, no blemishes, well covered, sixteen litres of milk a day. How could I know that she'd die on my hands?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. You insured the cow for twice as much as it was worth?

MAX. I insured her for what she was worth to me. Any objections? The insurance people had none. I paid the premium on the spot, and all they wanted was the money. They've eyes in their heads too, haven't they? It was only afterwards when they had to pay up that they started making objections. The animal died a perfectly natural death from colic. Pflasterer vouched for that, and so did Marie Hacker. Both under oath.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Marie Hacker?

PRESIDENT. Do you wish to examine Marie Hacker?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I will let it pass.

PRESIDENT (*to* MAX). You may go.

MAX. I should just like to say this smart city gent can't hurt me.

(*He goes off. Excitement among the public.*)

PRESIDENT. Gentlemen of the Jury. I must ask you not to allow public excitement over this case to influence you in any way. You must arrive at your conclusions exclusively from the evidence as it is given. Dr. Färber, will you please give me once more an exhaustive account of what took place on the day when your wife first fell ill. I wish to have the scene reconstructed in detail for the benefit of the Court, and to that end I have had a plan of the living-room prepared

for me. There is the table at which you, your wife, your child and your fellow-accused, Fräulein Gerst, were seated. I have had a wax model made to represent Frau Färber . . . Usher, have the model brought into Court.

(*While the* PRESIDENT OF THE COURT *is speaking the* USHERS *bring in a table and chairs, and place them in the centre foreground. Then a life-size model is brought in on an invalid chair.*)

ANNA. No, she was sitting there.

PRESIDENT. I see; there . . . Is the child there? Then have her brought in, please.

(LORE *comes forward.*)

Well, my dear, good morning. Now show us what a good little girl you can be. Sit down just there, will you?

(*During this last passage the Court is darkened. The table and chairs in the foreground are picked out by a spotlight, and the three together with the model are seated at it.*)

(*Out of the darkness*) Dr. Färber, you have just come home, you say, from your rounds. Your wife has delayed luncheon until your return.

(*With these words* DR. FÄRBER *goes to the table, sits down and they all begin to eat, including the model, representing* BETTY FÄRBER.)

(*Out of the darkness.*) What did you say?

(*There is a moment's pause.*)

FÄRBER. Burnt meat again!

BETTY. What can you expect? If you insist on spending all your time in the public-house . . .

FÄRBER. I've not been drinking at all. I've come straight from a patient.

BETTY. The butcher's wife saw you there.

FÄRBER. If you prefer the word of the butcher's wife to mine, then there's nothing for me to say.

BETTY. You reek of whisky.

FÄRBER. If you don't want me I'll remove myself.

ANNA. But really, doctor, Frau Färber has been waiting a long time.

BETTY. I can do without your support, Fräulein Gerst . . .! Eat properly, Lore.

LORE. I am eating properly.

FÄRBER. Must you shout at the child?

LORE (*whimpering*). Mother's always shouting at me.

BETTY. You untruthful little wretch. Get up from the table and go to your room at once.

(LORE *goes whimpering.*)

FÄRBER. Was that necessary?

BETTY. Who wears herself to the bone over the child—you or I? You imagine you're showing your love by bringing her home sweets and toys. All you do is spoil her.

FÄRBER. Fräulein Anna, would you mind getting me a glass of water? Did Frau Wagner come?

ANNA. Yes.

FÄRBER. Did you give her any medicine?

ANNA. Yes, doctor.

FÄRBER. Has she by any chance paid her bill?

ANNA. She says she is out of work, and that she'll pay as soon as she can.

FÄRBER. Do these people expect me to live on air and promises? I have to pay for the medicine too. It doesn't fall from the skies. Tell her that she need not come again until she has paid for what she owes.

(ANNA *goes off into the darkness.*)

CRIES FROM THE ONLOOKERS. Dirty old miser! Boo! Boo!

PRESIDENT (*out of the darkness*). Silence!

BETTY. In the early days I used to help you, and things went well enough.

FÄRBER. I need regular assistance. You have enough to do about the house.

BETTY. Why not be honest and say outright that I was no good!

FÄRBER. Certainly there were things now and then. You used to lecture me in front of my patients, for instance. You used to advise patients without consulting me.

BETTY. You can't be a doctor's wife without learning a few things.

FÄRBER. You should have kept them to yourself.

BETTY. If there wasn't the child to think of I know just what I should do.

FÄRBER. What do you mean by that?

BETTY. I hate you.

FÄRBER. I don't understand you; you're for ever making these ridiculous scenes.

BETTY. I don't make scenes . . . It's you who've ruined my life, ruined it, ruined it, ruined it . . .

FÄRBER. Must we have this all over again, day after day?

BETTY. If it hadn't been for father's money you'd have been a mere nobody to this day. No degree, no practice—just a cheap quack . . . Where are you going?

FÄRBER. To find a little peace and quiet, at the inn.

BETTY. Oh, I'm so unhappy . . .

FÄRBER. You're making a hell of your own life, and of mine too.

BETTY. You haven't even remembered my birthday . . . You've never once remembered my birthday.

FÄRBER. What, is it to-day?

BETTY. August the twentieth.

FÄRBER. Good. Then it's your birthday to-day . . . You must forgive me for forgetting it.

BETTY. Just be good to me—just be good and kind . . .

(ANNA *comes back.*)

Where on earth have you been all this time?

ANNA. With Lore.

BETTY. What have you to do with her? First you take my husband from me, and now you're trying to take away my child.

FÄRBER. Betty!

BETTY. Oh, I know everything. Do you think I'm blind? Do you think I'm deaf? It's common property. The whole neighbourhood is talking about it. How you're betraying me in my own home! Oh, but you're vulgar!

ANNA. I must go, doctor.

FÄRBER. Please, stay.

BETTY. No, she shan't stay here. Pack your things up this instant and go—you whore!

(FÄRBER *gets up, goes over to her, and slaps her face.*)

VOICES FROM THE DARKNESS. Blackguard!
To strike a woman like that!
Swine!
Murderer!

(*The moment the voices break in the model becomes inanimate.*)

PRESIDENT (*out of the darkness*). Silence! Or I shall clear the Court.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL (*out of the darkness*). Dr. Färber, did you often strike your wife?

FÄRBER. Never.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. That I beg leave to doubt.

PRESIDENT (*out of the darkness*). What did your wife say when you struck her?

BETTY. You struck me!

FÄRBER. And if you repeat that word I will strike you again.

BETTY. Can you deny it? Can you deny that you love this woman?

FÄRBER. No, it is true that I love her.

BETTY. Oh, you're rotten, rotten . . . you think only of yourself, always of yourself.

FÄRBER. Try to be reasonable, Betty. You can't force me to live with you. Do you want me to think of you as a jailer who watches my movements night and day, whom I must hate for hiding the key that locks me away from my freedom? Do you want to make me feel like that about you? We must live apart from one another.

BETTY. Never.

(*There is a pause.*)

FÄRBER. In that case you must put up with having Anna in the house.

ANNA. Doctor, please—let me go. It is best that I should go.

FÄRBER. No. I've declared my love for you in front of my wife. I love you; I can't live without you; I won't live without you.

(FÄRBER *goes out into the darkness. The model sits stiffly at the table.*)

PRESIDENT (*out of the darkness*). I see. You went out of the room and left the two women alone together. Fräulein Gerst, will you tell the Court what happened then?

ANNA. Frau Färber said—"I don't feel very well; give me some valerian." I went to the medicine cupboard and did as she asked. For a little while we said nothing. Then Frau Färber came over to me.

PRESIDENT (*from the darkness*). We must know precisely what took place now. You were standing there, and the dead woman was there?

ANNA. No, Frau Färber was on the other side.

PRESIDENT. On the other side, then, Usher.

(USHERS *carry the model across, and then retire.*)

(*Out of the darkness.*) Frau Färber was the first to speak?

(*The model comes to life.*)

BETTY. Do you love him, Anna?

ANNA. Yes, Frau Färber.

BETTY. Do you hate me, Anna?

ANNA. No, Frau Färber.

BETTY. What will happen now?

ANNA. I shall kill myself. There is no other way.

BETTY. I used to hate you, Anna. I called down the filthiest diseases on your head. I prayed to God to strike you down, to disfigure you . . . Now all has turned round on me.

ANNA. I will go away secretly, Frau Färber . . . I will not stand in your way . . . I know you love him too.

BETTY. No, you must not go. If only there wasn't the child to think of . . . We must stand together, Anna. As women we must stand together.

ANNA. Frau Färber . . .

BETTY. I don't hate you any more, but him . . . it is him that I hate. He has made my life a misery, he has degraded me, he has beaten me, he has taken away the one thing that remained for me—my child . . . Yes, Anna, she is not my child any more; she is a stranger, a poor strange little creature. She is afraid of me, she lies to me . . .

ANNA. Frau Färber, you don't know what you are saying.

BETTY. But I'll pay him back. I'll have my revenge on him, so that he'll never forget. So that if I must suffer, at least he shall suffer with me.

ANNA. No, no, Frau Färber—you must not say these dreadful things. You only say such things because you still love him.

BETTY. The lonely forget how to love.

(*There is a moment's pause. The lights come up, and the model is rigid again.* ANNA *takes her seat on the prisoner's bench.*)

PRESIDENT. Usher, you can remove these properties. I have purposely refrained from interrupting your narrative, Fräulein Gerst. But what you have implied is that Frau Färber committed suicide to revenge herself on her husband. . . . Yes?

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. I protest against this monstrous calumny against the dead. Frau Färber was a devout woman who would have regarded the very thought of suicide as a cardinal sin.

PRESIDENT. I will now call the State Pathologist.

PATHOLOGIST. Science, with a certainty which precludes any question of doubt, can distinguish between the two forms of arsenical poisoning—the acute and the chronic. Post-mortem examination of the various organs of the dead woman has revealed all the signs of chronic arsenical poisoning. The distribution of the poison throughout the body shows that the arsenic must have been taken in small doses over a protracted period, culminating in the final larger and fatal dose. Arsenic is a colourless, odourless and tasteless poison, and is thus unusually favourable for criminal purposes. Admittedly in the case before us the particular preparation used would have had a slight metallic taste; but this taste can be eliminated by dilution—in sweetened tea, for instance. As it was, however, the poison was evidently taken in such small doses that the taste must have been unnoticeable. In short, the post-mortem on the deceased woman reveals, without the slightest shadow of a doubt, that the poison was administered in a graduated series of doses. Frau Färber died of chronic arsenical poisoning.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. Has science never been wrong?

PATHOLOGIST. No. Within its limits science is infallible.

PRESIDENT. That concludes the expert evidence. I call on the Counsel for the Prosecution.

PROSECUTING COUNSEL. Gentlemen of the Jury. A virtuous woman does not die with a lie upon her lips. A loving mother does not die without taking farewell of her only child. If, as has been suggested, Frau Färber really committed suicide, would she be likely to leave her child behind to the tender mercies of her rival? This psychological point alone should be enough to wreck the suicide hypothesis. But in addition to that we have the unambiguous and irrevocable verdict of the pathologist. It is a question of murder, and our task is to unmask the murderers. We must ask ourselves who could have been interested in the death of this unfortunate woman? Who would expect to benefit by her death?—The accused, and nobody else! Since we have been vouchsafed no confession we are compelled to reach our conclusion by what is called circumstantial evidence. And there can be no escape. Link by link the chain has been tested and found sound. Let us examine the facts of the case. We have a marriage, like a thousand

other marriages. A smoothly running marriage. A happy marriage. Then suddenly into this scene of concord there steps an unscrupulous woman ; a wanton who callously shatters the harmony of family life, who brings strife and conflict in her train dispelling for ever the peace and happiness in which this family had lived ; the only atmosphere in which a child can develop fully and truly. The other accused, a man of hopelessly weak character, betrays his wife, shamelessly enters into immoral relations with this woman under the very roof which shelters his wife and child. And the wife, discovering the truth, remains silent, choosing like a true mother to put the well-being of the child before her own happiness. Then to the guilty pair comes the frightful idea of removing from their path the innocent woman who stands between them and their desires. They do not have to look far for an opportunity. The doctor is of course familiar enough with the properties of poisons ; is fully aware both of their healing and their destructive qualities. And so this man, the avowed saviour of suffering humanity, becomes—a murderer ! And who helps him in the execution of his appalling scheme ? Who but the accused, Anna Gerst ? These two have both entangled themselves in a network of contradictions. Why, for instance, did not the doctor immediately recognize the symptoms of poisoning ? Why did he not call in a colleague for consultation ? Why was the maid-servant specifically told to say nothing of the dying woman's condition ? Why did Anna Gerst deny her intimacy with Dr. Färber ? Why did she deny that she had ever administered medicine containing arsenic to patients ? From this mass of lies and contradictions we can deduce nothing but the workings of a guilty conscience which has something to conceal. And what was to be concealed was neither more nor less than the murder of Frau Färber.

A Public Prosecutor, by the very nature of his calling, must be the most impartial official in the world. I should be failing in my duty were I to refrain from saying what little I can in favour of the accused. My reference to Dr. Färber as a weak character had in itself an extenuating significance. For the strong are masters of their fate, while the weak seek only to escape from it.

I regard the relationship between Dr. Färber and Anna Gerst as a striking instance of the strong, the wolf in sheep's clothing, inspiring the weak to wrong-doing. Anna Gerst felt herself badly injured by the dead woman ; I take it as the truth that Frau Färber, in a moment of excitement, did in fact call her a whore.

Finally I would say to you that half-measures in a case of this gravity are not enough. An eye for an eye, the Old Testament says, a tooth for a tooth . . . A life for a life !

Gentlemen of the Jury, I demand that you bring in a verdict of guilty.

PRESIDENT. Counsel for the Defence !

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Gentlemen of the Jury ! Not a day passes but we read of the fate of a thousand unfortunate men and women. We read of men who have fallen in battle, of men destroyed by the

elemental forces of land and sea, of men mangled by machinery, of men dying for want of bread. But how can these things, terrible as they are, be compared with the fate of the innocent man unjustly condemned ? The thought of such must haunt us day and night ; for in them Justice has been ravished and Right condemned.

Gentlemen of the Jury ! You will have to make up your minds on two simple points : was Frau Färber murdered ? And if so was she murdered by the accused ? My colleague believes that Dr. Färber and Fräulein Gerst are guilty of this shocking crime. I believe that they are innocent. And this belief of mine in their innocence can only be shaken by proof of their guilt . . . But where is such proof forthcoming ? There is no proof ; no jot or tittle of proof. The entire case for the Prosecution is based on circumstantial evidence, and circumstantial evidence alone. And I shall be able to show that just those circumstances which my colleague regards as pointing directly to the guilt of the accused actually do nothing of the kind. My colleague enlisted the aid of science, of pathology. But the scientific evidence proves nothing at all beyond the fact that the unfortunate woman died of arsenical poisoning. Does it prove that she was poisoned by the accused ? Does it prove that she was murdered at all ? Do we not all know of cases in which the suicide has first experimented to ascertain the fatal dose ?

Frau Färber was an injured woman, a broken woman. Her only hold on life was through her child. And on the occasion of that fatal quarrel she saw her child taking sides against her. Why should she not, in a moment of overwhelming despair, have decided to put an end to her life ? The learned Judge knows well that even confession may be false, sworn witnesses materially in error, self-accusations founded only in hysteria. And if this is so, how much more treacherous are the snares of circumstantial evidence ? How many men in the course of centuries have fallen innocent victims to the specious evidence of circumstances, have been unjustly condemned, have been broken on the wheel, burnt at the stake, beheaded ?

But, you will ask, what is the Judge to do when the deed itself cries out against the man who denies it ? He must surely base his findings on circumstantial explanations ? Have there not been cases, you will say, where words and actions, witnesses and clues and even silences have built up suspicion and confirmed it, where link by link the chain to bind the guilty one has been tested and found sound ? Perhaps, but we are proceeding from false premises. Dare we assume that one deed really follows another with infallible certainty ? If a man has lied once, is he to be branded as a liar for all time ? If a man has betrayed once, are we to withhold all future trust from him ? Life is surely not so simple. When a lamp suddenly flickers and goes out it may be for any one of several reason. The wick may be burnt out, the oil may be exhausted, the wind may have blown it out, or the rain extinguished it. How many times have we watched without comprehending the spendthrift turn miser, the humanitarian turn oppressor,

the honourable man descend to thieving, the gentle nature turn to homicide?

When once in Venice the Judge sentenced an innocent baker's apprentice to the scaffold, the Senate resolved that from that time forth a message should always be sent to the presiding Judge at a murder trial with the words "Remember the baker's apprentice."

Gentlemen of the Jury! I beg you too to think of the baker's apprentice! I beseech you at all costs to keep unsmirched the fair name of Justice! Your verdict must confirm the innocence of the accused!

PRESIDENT. Have you anything further to say, Dr. Färber?

FÄRBER. The Prosecuting Counsel has familiarized the Court with my depravity. I have been wondering whether that gentleman would still feel so raised above all human weaknesses if his whole life had been turned publicly inside out as mine has been during this interminable trial. Everything I have said in irresponsible moments, everything I have done in foolish moods, has borne witness against me here. I have been wondering if there is any man living with a character pure enough, an integrity strong enough, to withstand undamaged such a massed assault of slanderous gossip, of malicious insinuations, of little-minded accusations, and of down-right calumny. I have no desire to discredit the portrait that the Prosecution has offered you. I want to say only one thing. It is easier to make a man seem the picture of depravity than to show him as he is, a fallible human being. I am a weak man. I have stumbled and often failed. But you are not here to pass judgment on my character. The only question is whether I am guilty or not of this particular crime . . . I am not guilty.

PRESIDENT. Fräulein Anna Gerst, have you anything to say?

(ANNA *is silent.*)

Did you speak?

(ANNA *shakes her head.*)

The accused, Anna Gerst, will not avail herself of this last opportunity. Gentlemen of the Jury, in judging this case you must . . .

Darkness.

SCENE II

The Jury's Retiring Room. Twelve Jurymen in groups.

FIRST JURYMAN. Fancy meeting you here!

SECOND JURYMAN. The world's a small place.

THIRD JURYMAN (*showing a newspaper to the lady on the Jury*). Here's a picture of you, Fräulein.

THE WOMAN. It's not a bit like me.

SECOND JURYMAN (*offering a cigarette to the* FIRST JURYMAN). Not too well and not too badly—middling.

FIRST JURYMAN. Thank you.

THIRD JURYMAN. You must admit that you're no beauty queen.

THE WOMAN. Thank you for nothing.

SIXTH JURYMAN. I've told my wife a hundred times if I've told her once—I will not eat Swiss cheese. Any other sort, but not Swiss.

FIRST JURYMAN. You think the same, of course ?

SECOND JURYMAN. Oh, of course.

FIRST JURYMAN. An acquittal . . .

SECOND JURYMAN. Exactly.

FIRST JURYMAN. Would be nothing less than scandalous.

SECOND JURYMAN. It would indeed.

SEVENTH JURYMAN (*the* FOREMAN). Ladies and Gentlemen—the lunch interval is over. We must return to business.

(*They all sit down at the long table in the middle of the room.*)

FIRST JURYMAN. I move that we put the issue to the vote at once.

SECOND JURYMAN. Hear, hear.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. But, gentlemen, the issue is by no means clear yet. Remember that we are concerned with the ultimate fate of two human beings.

FIRST JURYMAN. Of two murderers.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. That has yet to be decided.

SIXTH JURYMAN. The woman is certainly a murderer. I've been watching her very closely all the time. She was always blushing or turning pale ; and that shows she's got a guilty conscience. And on top of all that she made no effort to defend herself. No innocent person would behave like that.

(*The man coughs, sits down, picks up the* SEVENTH JURYMAN's *handkerchief which happens to be lying on the table, and puts it angrily in his pocket.*)

THE WOMAN. Whatever else she's not, she's a proved liar.

FIFTH JURYMAN. Have you gone through life without ever lying ?

THE WOMAN. That's beside the point.

FIFTH JURYMAN. That's precisely the point.

FIRST JURYMAN. It's about time we put a stop to all this. We've had the whole thing out half a dozen times already.

FIFTH JURYMAN. So we resent giving a single hour of our supremely valuable time to deciding whether two people shall be consigned to perdition or not !

FIRST JURYMAN (*to* SECOND JURYMAN). Do you know that fellow ?

SECOND JURYMAN. Machine-minder. He gets his tobacco from me.

FIRST JURYMAN. He's a Red, isn't he ?

SECOND JURYMAN. That's it.

SIXTH JURYMAN. Decent people could never find themselves in such an awful situation. You can't deny that, now.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. If I accused you of theft, here and now, would you deny it?

SIXTH JURYMAN. Of course! Why?

SEVENTH JURYMAN. You have my handkerchief in your coat pocket.

SIXTH JURYMAN. This is no place for fooling.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. Not at all. Will you please turn out your pockets?

SIXTH JURYMAN. This is absurd! (*Angrily he turns out his pockets.*) There—pocket-book, cards, cigarette-case . . .

SEVENTH JURYMAN (*pointing to his outside breast pocket.*) And what have you there?

SIXTH JURYMAN. My handkerchief, of course!

SEVENTH JURYMAN. Actually it's mine. If you will look in the corner you will find my monogram.

SIXTH JURYMAN. How ridiculous! You left it lying on the table, and I must have picked it up absent-mindedly and stuffed it in my pocket. It might have happened to anybody.

FIFTH JURYMAN. But didn't you say just now that that sort of thing couldn't happen to decent people?

SEVENTH JURYMAN. If I cared to go to law about this I'd have you on toast. Circumstantial evidence. You coughed and took my handkerchief. The cough was obviously a blind, to make the theft appear accidental. You refused at first to empty your pockets. You denied taking it until the very last minute. I know perfectly well that you didn't steal it, but perhaps you can see now that words are double-edged and actions ambiguous. It's easy enough to prove anything by circumstantial evidence.

(SIXTH JURYMAN *angrily shakes his head.*)

THE WOMAN. But it's the motive that counts. We have to find a plausible motive for every action and base our conclusions on that. Otherwise there couldn't be any justice. How could we judge?

SEVENTH JURYMAN. Nothing springs from a single cause. Does a tree grow from one cause and one cause only? Perhaps because the sun shines on it? It has roots, and the roots dig into the soil; and the rain waters it, and the wind stirs its branches. It grows and it dies. And we know little about its growth and still less about its death. It is only about human beings that we are always so cocksure. And I think it's high time that we put an end to all this perpetual measuring with faulty rules, this perpetual appraising with dead words, this perpetual condemnation with hypocrisy in our hearts.

THE WOMAN. To err is human.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. But the most inhuman error is a miscarriage of justice.

FIRST JURYMAN. This is pure Bolshevism. I move this debate be closed.

SEVENTH JURYMAN. Who is in support of that motion? (*The majority hold up their hands.*) The majority . . . We have now to

decide whether the accused, Franz Färber and Anna Gerst, are guilty of the wilful murder of Frau Betty Färber. By German law the majority decides the verdict.

VOICES. Yes . . . no . . . yes . . . yes . . . no . . . yes . . . no . . . yes . . . yes . . . yes . . .

SEVENTH JURYMAN. I myself say no. The result of the vote, then, is eight guilty, four not guilty. The accused are found guilty of wilful murder.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE I

The Work-room in a Women's Prison. A long table is in the middle of the room. The door is opened and the PRISONERS *enter in procession, all dressed in uniform grey.*

WARDRESS (*in military tones*). Halt! . . . Right turn! . . . To the table! . . . Work!

(*The women seated at the table take their work-things and begin to sew. For a few moments there is complete silence, broken only by the pacing of the* WARDRESS *as she inspects the work of the* PRISONERS.)

WARDRESS (*to* FIRST PRISONER). What are you doing there?

FIRST PRISONER. Patching.

WARDRESS. Anyone would think you were making your trousseau.

FIRST PRISONER. It's the French stitch. I'm a seamstress outside. I've learned . . .

WARDRESS. What you've learned outside will do outside but not here. You learned a lot there that's done you no good. While you're in here German herring-bone is good enough for you. None of your frenchified fancywork.

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE. Number 237 for release!

WARDRESS. Number 237!

SECOND PRISONER. Here!

WARDRESS. Stand up! Pull yourself together. So long as you're in this place, number 237, you'll abide by the rules. And they mean order. You can do all the slouching you like when you're outside. You've not been too bad, number 237, not at all too bad. But you're too untidy, and that means slovenliness, lack of order. And if you're slovenly you trip up easy and come up against the law. That's what it is with you. I don't mean you any harm. The world outside's a rotten place, and won't be any better until there's a bit more order in it —like in here. Come on now. (*To the others.*) None of your tricks! You go on with your work.

(*The* WARDRESS *goes off with the* SECOND PRISONER.)

FIRST PRISONER. Lucky devil!

THIRD PRISONER. Why?

FIRST PRISONER. What d'you mean?

THIRD PRISONER. When I get out there'll be no food for me, and

no work. It ain't the first time. Then I'll pinch something and the whole bloody round'll start all over again.

FIRST PRISONER. Just look at me! All dressed up. Just undo the buttons and fold your collar back and you looked all dressed up. I've got some scissors here that do for a mirror. Want to look at yourself?

THIRD PRISONER. Cut it out. I'll see myself soon enough . . . Lotte, are you coming to me to-night?

FIRST PRISONER. No. I can't.

THIRD PRISONER. I know—it's the new one . . . I'll get even with you for that . . . Lotte, the doctor has put me down for extra jam. You can have it.

FIRST PRISONER. Thank you for nothing.

THIRD PRISONER. Are you going to do what you promised?

FIRST PRISONER. You're a beast.

THIRD PRISONER. Don't you see? I must have something of yours to smell, to feel. Something of yours. I love you.

FIRST PRISONER. And you want a lock of my hair?

MARIE (*to the* FOURTH PRISONER). When do you get out?

FOURTH PRISONER. Two days' time. Twelve o'clock.

MARIE. And you'll take him a letter?

FOURTH PRISONER. If they don't find it when they go over me. Have you got it?

MARIE. It's here.

FOURTH PRISONER. Where's the name?

MARIE. I don't want to write it.

FOURTH PRISONER. Tell me now; I'll remember it.

MARIE. Oh, I can't.

FOURTH PRISONER. What do you think I am? A thought-reader? How the hell can I find him without the address?

MARIE. Give me the letter.

FOURTH PRISONER. You are a funny one, you are.

MARIE. It's all right. It doesn't matter. I needn't really write at all. He promised me. He won't let me down. He'll marry me.

FOURTH PRISONER. They all say that.

MARIE. He's different, I tell you. "Marie," he said, "if you don't start talking and don't let me down I won't let you down. When they ask you who the father was say you don't know." And I've kept my mouth shut all right. They've got nothing out of me. I haven't said a thing; not a thing.

FOURTH PRISONER. And if he don't marry you?

MARIE. Oh, he will. We love each other.

FOURTH PRISONER. Sez you!

(*The door is thrown open and the* WARDRESS *comes in accompanied by the* GOVERNOR. *All the prisoners jump to their feet.*)

GOVERNOR. Number 513.

WARDRESS. Number 513 to the Governor.

(ANNA, *who has been sitting with her back to the audience, gets up and goes to him.*)

GOVERNOR. I have a letter here which you addressed to Dr. Färber. "My only beloved, the lawyer has written to say that I must have courage and not lose hope. If nothing comes of the appeal we must go on and endure as best we can. Be strong. Remember always that we are innocent and that I love you. I am yours for all time." Prisoners are forbidden to correspond with one another. I shall have to confiscate the letter.

(*The* GOVERNOR *and the* WARDRESS *go out.* ANNA *goes back to her place. There is a silence for some moments.*)

ANNA (*to* MARIE). Marie, will you please give me some of your yarn?

MARIE. You've no call to order me about.

ANNA. I'm not ordering you.

MARIE. What are you doing then? I'm not your slave any more . . . Not guilty, indeed! Poisoner!

ANNA. Why are you trying to hurt me, Marie?

MARIE. Because . . . you're no better than any of us.

FIRST PRISONER. We're all as good as she is!

THIRD PRISONER. You mustn't take it to heart. In this place people scream at you without knowing it. It's the spring.

ANNA. But I've done nothing to them.

THIRD PRISONER. That's just it. The last quod I was in there was a poor thing that thought she'd been buried alive. She used to rave and scream, and she tore out her hair and scratched herself till she bled.

ANNA. And what became of her?

THIRD PRISONER. She went dippy. Now she's neither dead nor alive.

ANNA. I don't understand.

THIRD PRISONER. She's cracked. Crazy—incurable.

ANNA. How dreadful.

THIRD PRISONER. Were they really going to hang you?

ANNA. Yes. It would have been better that way. All over and done with.

THIRD PRISONER. Some of them get let out after twenty-five years. I knew one who did thirty-two. When she got out she hadn't anywhere to go. She got turned out of her own place. It'd made her a bit weak in the head, and she finished up in the workhouse.

(ANNA *is silent.*)

Your man's here too?

ANNA. Yes.

THIRD PRISONER. I'd not trouble myself for any man. Do you think he'll thank you for it? They're all tarred with the same brush.

ANNA. Sometimes I wonder if I'm not going mad too. There is no air; the walls press in on me. I feel suffocated.

THIRD PRISONER. Don't you be a fool. Do you want to wear yourself out in this filthy hole? Saddle him with all the blame. You can do it. . . . And as soon as you're out you can let on that you were bluffing and make a getaway.

ANNA. Do you really mean that?

THIRD PRISONER. What am I telling you for?

ANNA. My lawyer has filed a petition for appeal.

THIRD PRISONER. You're an optimist, I must say! They'd fake up another charge rather than let you out once you're in. What are you thinking of? Just you get it into your head that justice is one beautiful racket, and the lawyers and beaks get the dividends!

ANNA. If it all comes to nothing, then . . .

THIRD PRISONER. Then what?

ANNA. I shall begin to think you're right.

FOURTH PRISONER. Ssh! She's coming!

WARDRESS (*enters*). Take up your work! Stand up! Form up! March . . . Number 513 will remain. Lawyer to see you.

(*All, except* ANNA, *go.*)

DEFENDING COUNSEL (*enters*). I have some news for you, Fräulein Gerst.

ANNA. Is it—all right?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. We have been refused leave to appeal.

(ANNA *sinks down lifelessly. The* COUNSEL *tries to help her.*)

ANNA. Don't worry about me, please. I'm quite all right. Really . . . Frau Färber's diary proves nothing?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Nothing to the satisfaction of the Court.

ANNA. Does Franz know about this?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. My dear young lady . . . Dr. Färber attempted to take his life. He is alive. There is nothing to worry about—just a nervous breakdown.

ANNA. If only I could write to him! But I can't. They won't let me. They confiscate my letters.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Try to be brave, Fräulein.

ANNA. I will be brave.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I want to tell you how profoundly I admire your strength, your courage—the way you are bearing your fate.

ANNA. Fate? There is no fate. There is only the judgment of others, fallible human beings. The ill-will of humanity; its stupidity, its malice; its blindness.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. You believe in nothing? Neither in law nor in necessity? And still you don't despair?

ANNA. I have no illusions. To speak of fate is pure rhetoric.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Always?

ANNA. Nearly always.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. And justice?

ANNA. When I was a child we used to play a game called blind

man's buff. One of us was blindfolded, and the others had to keep out of his way. The blind man lunged about the room until he managed to catch somebody who was even blinder than he was.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. What friends or relations have you outside?

ANNA. None.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I must go now. There is just one more thing. Dr. Färber applied for a marriage licence, and his application has been refused. Does that hurt you terribly?

ANNA. If only I could see him once, or even write to him.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Fräulein Gerst, may I put a straight question to you? Will you tell me frankly whether you wished Dr. Färber to get a divorce and marry you while his wife was still alive?

ANNA. I never even thought about it. It didn't seem to matter. I went to his house as secretary in answer to a newspaper advertisement. I did not love him at first. It was the work that interested me then, not him. He was too weak, and too domineering. After a year I gave up the job.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. But I'm hearing all this for the first time! There's nothing of this in your depositions.

ANNA. I said I was away on holiday.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Why did you throw up the job?

ANNA. Because of Frau Färber.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Frau Färber?

ANNA. I couldn't bear the way she nagged at him.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Was Frau Färber a bad wife?

ANNA. No, but she tormented him. With looks, with silences, with words. With words most of all.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Why did you return to the job?

ANNA. He could not make up his mind; he seemed incapable of deciding one way or the other.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. And you wanted him to decide?

ANNA. Perhaps.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Did you hate Frau Färber?

ANNA. I did not hate her. I despised her.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. All this is beyond me, I must confess.

ANNA. I expected too much of him.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Fräulein Gerst, I am speaking to you now as a friend. I want you to trust me. There is a terrible thought which I cannot dismiss from my mind. It haunts me, and torments me. Did you conceal anything material at the trial? Did you? Nobody can hear us. I beseech you to answer me.

ANNA. You want to know the truth?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Just the truth.

ANNA. Would he be released?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. If he really knew nothing of what was happening, yes.

ANNA. He knew—nothing.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. And all this time you've been lying?

ANNA. Yes.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. And now you must tell me the truth. The real truth.

ANNA. I killed Frau Färber.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. This is frightful.

ANNA. Will they let him go?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. If you will authorize me to make your confession public?

ANNA. That's all I want.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I am not a Judge, and it is not for me to condemn others. But I must confess that I cannot understand you. You insist that you love Dr. Färber. And yet you allow this man whom you love to be condemned for a crime he did not commit. How could you do it?

(*Silence.*)

ANNA (*crying out*). Because I believed until the end that they would never condemn an innocent man! Franz is innocent; and I am innocent too. I am innocent too!

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I believe you. (*After a pause.*) I can almost envy Dr. Färber.

ANNA. You envy him? Franz?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. To be loved as you love him, with such abandonment . . . with such . . . I must say it . . . such spiritual greatness, such living grace. I did not know such love existed in a time when the dead triumph over the living, when money is stronger than feeling, when the soul is killed by greed. . . . One must oneself be great to contain such greatness of love.

ANNA. How do you know that I love Franz like this?

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Would you otherwise have been ready to do what you just tried to do—to sacrifice yourself for his freedom?

ANNA. It is true, four years ago he was my world and my life. The spring bore his name, and the summer took its warmth from him. But for four years I have not seen him, and in these four years I have experienced so much. I was an ignorant girl when I first came here. And now I have seen the suffering that man inflicts on man. Years ago, when I heard of murderers and thieves I was so ready to judge and to condemn. But now I have met murderesses and thieves, big criminals and petty criminals, and I have forgotten how to judge, how to condemn. It is all a matter of chance—this man is virtuous, this man is a thief, this man is respectable, this one is a murderer—it is all blind, senseless chance. If you have money you don't need to steal; if you have no passions you will never do murder, even in your heart. I have met prisoners here who are better than the Judges who condemned them . . . Yes, I am a different person now after these four years. But has Franz changed too? If he is still the same as he was before, always thinking of himself, of his bank balance, of his peace of mind . . . I don't know whether I could still love him . . . whether he

might not have to be only a memory, a memory of beauty and pain. . . .

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Years of suffering must leave their traces on every man.

ANNA. You're right. I'm seeing ghosts. Stupid thoughts that one has in the night, and which will not stand the light of day. The cell is so narrow . . . I want you to take a letter from me to Franz. Please do this for me. Please.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I can't do even this, Fräulein Gerst. But to-morrow I shall be seeing him. Can I give him a message from you?

ANNA. Tell him that suicide is no way out, and that I love him, and that he must live because I want to live.

Darkness.

SCENE II

A Cell in the Men's Prison. Outside the PRISONERS *are singing.*

PRISONER. Listen.

FÄRBER. Singing.

PRISONER. Women.

FÄRBER. Why have they put you in with me?

PRISONER. I've got to see that you don't do anything crazy. They've got their eye on you after that suicide stunt.

FÄRBER. What difference does it make to them whether I die now or in twenty years' time? They'd save money on it.

PRISONER. You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick, you have. You're a prisoner of the State now, and you've got to behave as such. You've got to go on living and swallow your skilly every day. If you don't you're working against the authority of the State.

(*Silence.*)

FÄRBER. Was it you who said that they have men warders in the women's prison?

PRISONER. It's a fact they do.

FÄRBER. And have they free access to the prisoners?

PRISONER. I knew one who had a different girl every night. He was a lad, he was. Wouldn't have anything to do with virgins, though. Virgins'll do for kids, he said; a woman wants to be a bit experienced before she's any good. You've got to learn the game like everything else.

FÄRBER. I shall go mad.

PRISONER. Your girl's pretty hot stuff, isn't she?

FÄRBER. Who's been talking about her?

PRISONER. I'm only guessing.

FÄRBER. You've heard something. What is it?

PRISONER. I get my information.

FÄRBER. What do you mean ?

PRISONER. You're a bloody fool, sitting here like this. I know what do if I was in your shoes.

FÄRBER. What would you do ?

PRISONER. You can always die. You know all about poison ?

FÄRBER. Why do you ask ?

PRISONER. If you can smuggle some poison in here . . . I'm orderly next week. When that swine of a warder's on duty—that long fellow that's always yelling and kicking up bloody hell—I'll put some in his coffee in the evening. And we'll make a getaway the same night.

FÄRBER. I'll not do it.

PRISONER. Afraid, are you ? And why ? You may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.

FÄRBER. So even you believe that I killed my wife ?

PRISONER. Cut it out ! You can pitch that tale when you're out of the country.

FÄRBER. And Anna ?

PRISONER. She can look after herself. She's got a bigger pull than we have. She sleeps with the boss. You trust a woman to look after herself.

FÄRBER. It's not so simple as that. You don't know Anna.

PRISONER. She'll have forgotten you long ago. Has she ever written to you ?

FÄRBER. No.

PRISONER. There you are. You can't teach me anything about women.

(*Silence.*)

FÄRBER. I have a friend outside, a doctor.

PRISONER. Write to him and I'll smuggle the letter out. There's a bloke going out to-morrow. He'll take it.

FÄRBER. If they search him ?

PRISONER. That's his funeral. He knows where to put it.

FÄRBER. You say she's slept with a warder ?

PRISONER. More likely a dozen of them.

FÄRBER. I'm a fool.

PRISONER. I don't need telling that.

FÄRBER. Spring ; Summer ; Autumn ; Winter ; Spring ; Summer ; Autumn ; Winter . . . for ever and ever.

PRISONER. It's a long time all right.

FÄRBER. How long are you in for ?

PRISONER. Two years to go.

FÄRBER. I'm thirty-five now. Soon I'll have been here five years.

PRISONER. Another thirty and you'll get your ticket. Perhaps . . .

FÄRBER. Thirty-five years ?

PRISONER. I don't know how many days that makes. More than ten thousand, I guess.

FÄRBER. I'm not going to die here. I refuse to die here!

PRISONER. There's no call for you to.

FÄRBER. There must be a way out. A way out.

PRISONER. What have I been telling you? You're too bloody fond of your own skin, you are.

FÄRBER. I'll write that letter.

PRISONER. Here's a pencil.

FÄRBER. Paper?

PRISONER. Use the lavatory paper.

(FÄRBER *writes.*)

Give it here.

FÄRBER. As soon as I get out of the country I'll take another name and start afresh. South America. Australia. There's a life! What are you ringing for?

PRISONER. I never rang.

FÄRBER. You did ring.

PRISONER. And if I did, what the hell's it got to do with you? Mr. Poisoner!

FÄRBER. You're an informer! You swine! You filthy swine!

PRISONER. Let go of me.

FÄRBER. Admit it, you swine!

PRISONER. Hands off, I tell you.

FÄRBER. Admit it!

PRISONER. Let go of me. You're strangling me. Are you trying to do me in too, you devil?

FÄRBER. Yes. I'll kill you all right. You torture me, you poison my mind. You've called me a murderer, and I'll begin on you.

PRISONER. Help! Help!

(*In all the cells the* PRISONERS *begin to bang on the gates and rattle them and yell for help. A* WARDER *comes to the door, seizes* FÄRBER *and overpowers him. The* PRISONER *speaks to the* WARDER *under his breath.*)

WARDER (*to* FÄRBER). You're a nice one! So you'd poison me too, would you? You certainly ought to know how! Get out! (*To* PRISONER.) I'll tell the boss what you told me. It'll earn you a nice remission.

(*The* WARDER *shoves* FÄRBER *out of the cell.*)

FÄRBER. Murderer! Murderer!

(*Muffled yells for help come from the other cells.*)

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

The stage is divided. On the right the DEFENDING COUNSEL'S *office. On the left* MAX FRANKE'S *office.*

SCENE I

(*The* COUNSEL'S *office is revealed.*)

COUNSEL. You wish to speak to me, professor?

PATHOLOGIST. How long have those two served? Färber and Gerst?

COUNSEL. Five years.

PATHOLOGIST. Five years! So long?

COUNSEL. There are three hundred and sixty-five days in every year. Twenty-four hours in every day. Sixty minutes in every hour.

PATHOLOGIST. Why wasn't Frau Färber's diary found until six months after the trial?

COUNSEL. It was hidden in a lot of old junk and newspapers on the floor.

PATHOLOGIST. The diary, strictly speaking, is no proof.

COUNSEL. But my dear professor, one could hardly express one's intention to commit suicide more clearly.

PATHOLOGIST. Why on earth didn't they find traces of arsenic in any of the cups or glasses?

COUNSEL. Why ask me? In my opinion the police are answerable for a great deal there. Apparently they didn't make an analytical examination of a single piece of crockery. The whole atmosphere was so poisoned by slander and malicious rumours that they entirely overlooked the necessity of discovering the real poison.

PATHOLOGIST. The home life of those two certainly gave plenty of ground for suspicion.

COUNSEL. Färber loved Anna Gerst, and she loved him. Because neither of them were afraid to admit their love, which most people are afraid to do, the wife refused to forgive them, and determined to be revenged on them. You can't break through our hypocritical moral conventions without coming a cropper, it seems. That's always been so, and it won't be otherwise until we've got over our fear of looking truth in the face.

PATHOLOGIST. And when will that be?

COUNSEL. When we lose our fear of the consequences of truth.

PATHOLOGIST. A dream, my friend. Admittedly a beautiful one, but a dream nevertheless. Both fear and hunger are necessary to

humanity. Without fear a man turns criminal; without hunger he becomes an idler.

COUNSEL. I believe in a humanity which can live without fear and hunger.

PATHOLOGIST. Have you a copy of that diary?

COUNSEL. Here it is.

PATHOLOGIST (*reading*). "I can live no longer. It is impossible to begin all over again. My love for Franz is dead. I pray only that he will one day see himself as he really is; even if it is too late for him to make good."

COUNSEL. Nothing very vague about it.

PATHOLOGIST. You gave notice to appeal after the diary was found?

COUNSEL. Yes. But the Court called for the opinions of you experts, and refused to allow the appeal. The judgment was to the effect that even if the dead woman did express her intention to kill herself she was by a strange coincidence killed by others at the crucial moment. According to the opinion of the experts, which means you, it was a case of chronic arsenical poisoning.

PATHOLOGIST. When I read of that diary being found I resumed my experiments with arsenic. I told myself that it was purely scientific curiosity; but really that horrible business had upset me a little. I couldn't forget it. It's no fun having the fates of two human beings on your conscience. Anyway, as a result of these later experiments, I am convinced that the attitude I maintained at the trial, and after, was actually untenable.

COUNSEL. You mean to say that your evidence was false?

PATHOLOGIST. I mean to say that the woman took arsenic only once.

COUNSEL. In other words, you blundered?

PATHOLOGIST. There is no such thing as infallibility. I was mistaken.

COUNSEL. Do you realize what this means? Without your evidence the whole case for the prosecution falls to the ground. Everything they used to establish their guilt now points to their innocence.

PATHOLOGIST. Then Färber was . . .

COUNSEL. Not guilty.

PATHOLOGIST. And Anna Gerst . . .

COUNSEL. Not guilty.

PATHOLOGIST. But this is terrible.

COUNSEL. Terrible, you say?

PATHOLOGIST. What a fate!

COUNSEL. Well, what are you going to do?

PATHOLOGIST. Perhaps it would be enough if I got them pardoned —privately.

COUNSEL. Would that do away with the stigma of guilt?

PATHOLOGIST. But if it were made known generally public trust in Justice would be still more undermined.

COUNSEL. The trust of the people in Justice can only be undermined by injustice, not by justice.

PATHOLOGIST. You are still very young.

COUNSEL. Has one to be young to recognize the truth?

PATHOLOGIST. In a certain sense, yes.

COUNSEL. Are you seriously maintaining that in the elderly lying is a virtue?

PATHOLOGIST. As one grows older one increases in cautiousness.

COUNSEL. What is the need for caution here?

PATHOLOGIST. One has to think of Science.

COUNSEL. Are we here to serve Science, or does Science serve us? It seems to me that the present-day veneration of Science comes perilously near idolatory.

PATHOLOGIST. If my prestige is damaged Science generally is damaged in consequence.

COUNSEL. Truth comes before prestige.

PATHOLOGIST. Without prestige truth can accomplish nothing; no more than a nation can.

COUNSEL. It is bloodless concepts like "prestige" that lead people to slaughter one another in war, and which will be the ruin of mankind.

PATHOLOGIST. Do you really imagine that I'm not anxious to help these unfortunate creatures?

COUNSEL. You want to be their benefactor; yes. But Färber and Anna Gerst don't want benefactors; they want justice.

PATHOLOGIST. I fail to understand your excitement, and still less your sentimentality. You surely ought to be used to the course of the law by now.

COUNSEL. On the day when I find myself getting hardened to the automatic course of the law I'll resign from this profession and become a shoeblack. It's a miserable job being a lawyer. Day after day in a thousand different cases one has to defend avarice and betrayal, unscrupulous power and brutal savagery. Then suddenly there comes a case which teaches me the true meaning of my calling. For five years I've been fighting against an unjust condemnation. The thought of it invades even my sleep. Even in my dreams I find myself defending these people, always these two. And now you come to me and calmly ask me to betray them to save the face of Justice and of Science.

PATHOLOGIST. Just as you like, of course.

COUNSEL. If you haven't the courage to admit your mistake in public I'll force you to. In a week or two from now they will be free!

Darkness.

SCENE II

(MAX FRANKE'S *office is revealed.*)

MAX. That's the whole trouble!

BLASENKLEFFER. I knew it at once, sir. Nobody will have anything to do with the Färbers' house after what happened there. They say

it's haunted and that the murdered woman walks at night. They think if anybody paid money for it they'd go to the devil at once.

MAX. Idiots! One day old Färber himself will go back to live there and the Gerst bitch with him.

BLASENKLEFFER. We'll not live to see that.

MAX. I shall, if you won't.

BLASENKLEFFER. I suppose that's your idea of a good joke.

MAX. You may as well know that they've both been found innocent, and they'll soon be out.

BLASENKLEFFER. Ha! ha! ha!

MAX. Stop laughing like a bloody fool. It's a fact I'm telling you.

BLASENKLEFFER. You mean to say Färber and his girl are really coming out?

MAX. With your permission. And by the way, you'd better watch your step. You're the criminal now.

BLASENKLEFFER. Me? What have I done wrong?

MAX. You didn't arrest them, did you? Oh no!

BLASENKLEFFER. Why of course I arrested them. But it was you . . .

MAX. None of that either. I merely told you what that damned little tart Marie told me. And you found it necessary to trump it up into a murder case. After promotion, weren't you? Well, you're finished now. The game's up. It's you for the sack.

BLASENKLEFFER. They haven't proved anything yet.

MAX. It's all proved up to the hilt. It's in the paper here. All down in black and white.

BLASENKLEFFER. And I know something that's not in the paper—yet. Perhaps that'll be in black and white to-morrow. Who knows?

MAX. What the bloody hell are you talking about?

BLASENKLEFFER. Well, to begin with there's a little story about a cow.

MAX. So that's your dirty game! Blackmail! You would, would you? Well, you can take it from me that there was nothing wrong with the cow. It died of colic. Got that? Colic! You'd better write it down so's not to forget it! Me and the insurance people are all square. I've insured my harvest and my hay with them this very day. You didn't know that, did you? The next thing is to prosecute you for blackmail. Get out!

BLASENKLEFFER. I'm sorry. I lost my head thinking of what's coming to me.

MAX. You'll get what's coming because you're a slacker at your job.

BLASENKLEFFER. We used to be good friends, Max.

MAX. Herr Franke, if you please. Justice always wins in the long run; and you'll find this is the long run.

CURTAIN

ACT FIVE

On the left is a Garden of a Village Inn, decorated with garlands and Chinese lanterns. Before the door is a triumphal arch with a transparency : " All's well that ends well." On the right is DR. FÄRBER'S *house, with a plaque over the door : " Welcome Home."*

PFLASTERER. How much compensation did you say they were getting ?

SECOND FARMER. Färber's getting 17,500 marks, and so is Fräulein Gerst. That makes 35,000 marks.

PFLASTERER. That's a bit thick, that is. I'd do five years for 5,000 thalers any day.

SECOND FARMER. They've had plenty to eat, a bed, and a roof over their heads. What more do you want ?

PFLASTERER. Have you seen about your mortgage yet ?

SECOND FARMER. I told that fellow that if he distrains on the horse as well I'll shut up shop and clear out and leave him to look after the wife and eleven kids. I've worked hard and honest all my life and I can't get on without that horse. But I could have talked myself blue in the face. It's no good. They're going to put it up for auction on Friday.

PFLASTERER. We'll make it hot for anybody that starts bidding for that horse. We'll all be there.

SECOND FARMER. What do you think, Philipp ? Are these two really not guilty, or what ?

PFLASTERER. They've been acquitted all right. But then there's no denying they were condemned as well. What do you make of that ?

SECOND FARMER. All said and done, they've got the money.

PFLASTERER. Money for jam, that is. Brand-new thousand-mark pieces, straight from the mint. They've done well for themselves, I'm thinking.

SECOND FARMER. Come and have a drink.

(*They go into the inn.*)

MAX (*in his best clothes enters, looks round, and goes up to a girl who is standing on a ladder, fixing a lamp. He pinches her leg.*) Very nice too !

THE GIRL (*screams*). Herr Franke . . .

MAX. Where did you get to last night ?

THE GIRL. I was in the stable. I couldn't get away.

MAX. In the stable ? You've been gadding about.

THE GIRL. The place where you had so many of us. The postman's wife, for instance.

MAX. Look here, young lady. You're jealous. You're a ninny! To-night by the haystack in the churchyard, after the fun.

THE GIRL. I don't like to.

MAX. I'll make you like it. You be there!

(*The* GIRL *goes off.*)

(*Strikes a pose, takes a paper from his pocket, and reads.*)

Ladies and gentlemen! Most honoured guests! There is an old proverb which says: "All's well that ends well"; and proverbs are always right. You have a stormy past behind you; a past of striving and suffering. But now we must forget all that. There is also the good side to remember. Even the darkest cloud has its silver lining. I am not speaking of the compensation money, though that in these hard times is not to be despised. I mean simply that we, your fellow villagers, have always believed that you are honourable citizens. You have made our village famous; it has been described in all the newspapers, and a son of our village has even read about it in far-away America. Even in the cinemas our beloved home has been depicted for all to see. And with all this in mind I, Max Franke, District Councillor, call for three hearty cheers for our honoured guests . . .

POSTMAN'S WIFE (*enters*). Max!

MAX. I've no time now.

POSTMAN'S WIFE. No time, haven't you? I noticed you had plenty of time for that little hussy, Barbara.

MAX (*pulling down a lantern that has caught fire*). Somebody didn't fix that properly. It burns like tinder. It would have burnt you up before you could say Jack Robinson.

POSTMAN'S WIFE. Ay, you need someone to help you if you want a lovely fire.

MAX. What do you mean by that?

POSTMAN'S WIFE. What are your stacks insured for? My husband says five hundred marks.

MAX. If that's true I'll buy you a new shawl.

POSTMAN'S WIFE. He's got a card for you from the insurance. He'll bring it up to-morrow.

MAX. Not so loud. Your old man's in there. It doesn't matter to me; I'm thinking of you.

POSTMAN'S WIFE. Will you come to-night?

MAX. Can't say, my love . . . ah, the worthy pedagogue!

(*The* SCHOOLMASTER *comes in with a troop of children.*)

CHILDREN. Good morning, sir.

MAX. Good morning, children. (*Softly to* POSTMAN'S WIFE.) All right, I'll come. (*Aloud.*) Now then, have you learnt to sing properly?

SCHOOLMASTER. Yes. It's all finished. Those two poor people. Who would have thought it?

MAX. What happened? An accident?

SCHOOLMASTER. I mean Dr. Färber and Fräulein Gerst. Who could have believed that they were criminals? Such dear, kind people.

MAX. Ah well! Now, children.

CHILDREN (*in chorus*). All's well that ends well.

SCHOOLMASTER. Pst! If you'll pardon me, sir . . . (*He sings.*) La . . . la . . . la . . . Jakob, one does not receive unfortunate visitors with one's finger in one's nose.

MAX. Unfortunate! Unfortunate! I hear that word everywhere I go. No gloom here, please! This is a day of resurrection.

SCHOOLMASTER. A day of resurrection. How beautifully you put things, Herr Franke . . . now then, children—one, two, three . . .

CHILDREN (*sing*).

All's well that ends well,
Bear your burdens stoutly;
Only God above can tell
To whom we sing devoutly.
Therefore face life with a smile,
He will help you o'er the stile.
All's well that ends well;
Only God can tell.

MAX. Very fine. Very fine. I congratulate you. Only one thing I don't quite understand—what is it that only God can tell?

SCHOOLMASTER. The Lord God—He alone can tell which of us is pure of heart . . . Poetic licence, if I may say so. I composed the song myself, you see.

MAX. Very true, very true. Only God can tell. Ah, here comes the band. You'd better take the children along to the station. Well, bandmaster, what's your programme?

(*The* SCHOOLMASTER *goes off with his children as the* BANDMASTER *and his band enter. They are in full dress.*)

BANDMASTER. We thought a funeral march might do to start off with, sir. The one we always play when we bury an honourable man who has fought the good fight. Then after the address how about "The Conquering Hero"?

MAX. But why in the name of thunder a funeral march?

BANDMASTER. Seeing all the unhappiness they've left behind them, sir. Burying the past, sir. Very allegorical, if I may say so.

MAX. Very. But for goodness' sake play something brighter. Why not a waltz or something?

BANDMASTER. I think it ought to be something a bit heartfelt, sir, begging your pardon. At least when they first enter the village. How about "Home sweet home"?

MAX. All right. Play "Home sweet home." (*Looking at his watch.*) It's time you were gone, or you'll be late for the train.

(*They troop off, and* MAX *sings the first bars of the* CHILDREN'S *song to himself.* PFLASTERER *comes in.*)

PFLASTERER. You sound happy, Max.

MAX. Happy? What the hell are you talking about?

PFLASTERER. I've got a cow to sell.

MAX. You can keep your damned cow.

PFLASTERER. She's insured for six hundred marks.

MAX. Then her number's up, I guess.

PFLASTERER. Do you want her?

MAX. I'm through with that sort of business.

PFLASTERER. You're what?

MAX. No more of this petty stuff.

PFLASTERER. I'm sorry I haven't a blooming herd to sell you.

MAX. If you had I wouldn't take it. Honesty is the best policy.

PFLASTERER. And old whores make the best saints! And thieves with a bank balance the most honest men!

(*He goes off.* MARIE *appears at the fence.*)

MARIE. Max.

(MAX *starts, looks round the garden and sees nobody.*)

It's me.

MAX (*sees her indistinctly*). Who's that?

MARIE. It's me.

MAX (*approaching her*). Marie?

MARIE. Marie.

MAX. How the hell did you get here?

MARIE. I'm out.

MAX. And you've come straight here? To-day?

MARIE. I thought to myself I won't write; I'll go suddenly and surprise him.

MAX. You've done that all right. A nice surprise indeed. You'd better get out of here at once.

MARIE. Then will you come to me?

MAX. I know, I know. But do you realize who we're expecting to-day? Färber and the Gerst woman—the two you got into trouble.

MARIE. Me?

MAX. Yes, you. You can't get out of it. You started in on me and yarned on about sticking a needle into her heart. And it was all lies. I never thought they'd done it. It was you who swore to it. And you of all people ought to keep out of the way to-night. The whole thing came through your meddling from beginning to end. It was all your fault!

MARIE. So was the child too, I suppose; and what happened to it!

MAX. Surely it was. What else?

MARIE. I'll tell every living soul that you were its father! I'll tell every living soul what you really are—a liar and a perjurer!

MAX. Then I'll have you arrested.

MARIE. Oh, I won't tell anyone. Oh, Max—four years I've been waiting for you. I thought of you always—in the morning when I got up, and at night when I tried to sleep. It didn't seem such a terribly long time, nor so very hard; for I could always think that you'd marry me when it was over. I used to think Max will marry me, and then you'll begin a new life. You will marry me, Max, won't you?

MAX. Are you crazy? (*There is the sound of distant music.*) You must get out of here at once. Never show your face here again. I mean well by you; but it's no good your expecting me to protect you. I'm on the Council now. And if the people saw you they'd lynch you.

MARIE. You—on the Council?

MAX. Yes, I am.

MARIE. I've been a fool. I've got what I deserved.

MAX. It's been no picnic for me either.

MARIE. You filthy blackguard!

MAX. Not so loud!

MARIE. Not so loud indeed! I know what you are—a swine, a blackguard, a traitor, a seducer! And I don't care who knows it.

MAX. Not so loud, damn you! Don't shout so!

MARIE. I shall shout as loud as I can.

MAX. Marie; don't you love me at all?

MARIE. You can't scare me with your threats; and you can't take me in with your fine manners either. I've been bad—for you. I murdered my child—for you. I served four years—for you. And now you've done the dirty on me—you've never done anything else. Never. Never!

MAX. Here comes the procession. They'll see you.

MARIE. Let them see me. There! (*She boxes his ears.*)

MAX. You're trying to ruin me.

MARIE. Because you're rotten, rotten, and because I like you.

MAX. Here they come. . . . There's your Anna. . . . And there's the doctor.

MARIE. You dirty hypocrites! Didn't you all howl for them to be hung? And now you make up to them with the band playing, and act as though you'd always thought they were innocent as lambs! Why don't they say what they said five years ago? (*To* MAX.) I suppose they've all got short memories—like yours!

MAX. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you common little bitch! If you won't go, stay here. Tell them you've come to congratulate them because you're sorry.

MARIE. Yes, I'm sorry all right. But I'm not telling them so. What can I say to them? That I was a fool, a sucker? That I've always believed in them? I should smile! I'd rather clear out. I

don't need you or this place either. I've my own two hands, and they'll carry me through—and I'll never fall for another like you.

(MARIE *goes. The music becomes louder. The procession comes into view. First the band, then the* SCHOOLMASTER *and his children, then* DR. FÄRBER *and* ANNA, *then the public. The music ceases at a sign from* MAX. *Men and women press forward to shake hands with* FÄRBER *and* ANNA.)

I've always said one need only look at you, doctor, to know that you couldn't be a murderer. And Fräulein Anna here—she's so kind, she wouldn't hurt a fly.

It was those townsfolk—they thought they'd show us country folk a thing or two—that's how it all happened. They hate us, they do.

It is always the lot of the upright to suffer. We must have a monument—a memorial to your courage.

What do you think, Fräulein Anna? Old Pflasterer's wife is expecting again—and the maid too.

And it's his child.

It's a shame.

FÄRBER. Thank you. Splendid. Thank you.

ANNA (*to* FÄRBER). Isn't it all horrible! If only we could get away by ourselves!

WOMAN'S VOICE. They're just as high and mighty as they used to be.

ANOTHER WOMAN'S VOICE. That Gerst woman looks as though she's grown a crown in prison.

ANOTHER WOMAN'S VOICE. Stuck-up little bitch!

MAN'S VOICE. Look at her, the shameless hussy. That's what we've been sweating our guts out for.

ANOTHER MAN'S VOICE. The music alone cost twenty marks.

ANOTHER MAN'S VOICE. I've always said it's no concern of ours whether they're guilty or not. Leave them to get out of their own dirty mess.

MAX. Silence, please! Ladies and gentlemen! Most honoured guests! The old proverb says "All's well that ends well." And proverbs are never wrong . . .

(*At this moment the rain comes pouring down in a sudden shower.* MAX *looks helplessly round. The* BANDMASTER *gives a sign. The music strikes up "For he's a jolly good fellow." Everyone begins to sing, at the same time rushing up the steps into the inn.* FÄRBER *and* ANNA *remain behind alone. It has stopped raining.*)

ANNA. I can't bear it any longer.

FÄRBER. Triumphal arches, music, speeches, everybody rushing up —"My dear doctor—I've *always* known that you couldn't be guilty!" Have these good people really forgotten that five years ago they all but stoned us? . . . Here's another.

(BLASENKLEFFER *climbs over the fence.*)

ANNA. Let's go home, away from all this.

BLASENKLEFFER. Doctor . . .

ANNA. Aren't you the man . . . ?

BLASENKLEFFER. Blasenkleffer, yes. Just Blasenkleffer. A policeman no longer. Dismissed the force. Because of you.

FÄRBER. Because of us ?

BLASENKLEFFER. It was me who arrested you. They all believed in you here. And now I'm suffering for it.

FÄRBER. I'm not sorry.

BLASENKLEFFER. I was sure you'd help me, sir. It's not charity I want. Just a little loan. I'll come and see you to-morrow, and then I'll tell you something that'll open your eyes. Do you know why you were sent up ? Just because that blackguard Max Franke had set his heart on getting on the Council. It was all his doing. He reported you to me, and I had to arrest you. Now he is a bloody Councillor, and he's downed me. It was all his doing. (*He falls off the fence.*) Now I've torn my trousers and broken the fence. If I was still at my old job I'd have to report myself for damaging property. On well, it's an ill wind . . .

(*He goes off.*)

PFLASTERER (*enters, pointing at the retreating* BLASENKLEFFER). There's the guilty one. He arrested you because he was out for promotion. Now he's got it the wrong way round.

(FÄRBER *and* ANNA *say nothing.*)

You must come and have a look at my missus, doctor.

FÄRBER. With pleasure.

PFLASTERER. The cow's none too good, either.

FÄRBER. The same old cow ?

PFLASTERER. What do you take me for ? Sold her long ago. It's only my wife that I can't change. And she'll follow me down to hell just to annoy me.

FÄRBER. I'll come and look at your cow.

PFLASTERER. What I really wanted to say, sir, is that I never thought you were guilty.

FÄRBER. Thank you.

PFLASTERER. Thank *you.*

(*He goes.*)

FÄRBER. I want to shout into their faces. I want to shout at them that they're all to blame. Every one of them. All to blame for our five long years. All guilty of stealing five years from our lives. And such years . . .

ANNA. Listen, Franz. A cuckoo. And how sweet it all smells. The corn is up already. They say it will be the best harvest for years.

(*They go into the house. An official arrives.*)

OFFICIAL (*to a girl*). Hi! Have you seen Dr. Färber?

(*The* GIRL *nods.*)

Haven't you got a tongue in your head? Can't you give a civil answer?

(*The* GIRL *makes a sign.*)

Oh, I see. Go and fetch the doctor.

(*The* GIRL *indicates the house.*)

Right here?

(*The* GIRL *nods. The* OFFICIAL *rings the bell.*)

ANNA (*opens the door*). Here's another, Franz.

OFFICIAL. I wish to speak to Dr. Färber.

(FÄRBER *comes out.*)

FÄRBER. Well?

OFFICIAL. Forgive me for disturbing you, doctor. I'm only here for a minute, and it's my only chance of seeing you.

FÄRBER. What can I do for you?

OFFICIAL. Just an official matter.

FÄRBER. Official?

ANNA. More officials?

OFFICIAL. To make a long story short, I have to deliver an account. Your debt to the State.

FÄRBER. My debt—to the State? You've got it the wrong way round, my friend.

OFFICIAL. Arrears of rent. Cost of your wife's burial. Education and upbringing of the child. Unpaid telephone rent. Urgent repairs to house. Usual taxes. Altogether sixteen thousand three hundred and forty-one marks, fifty-six pfennigs.

(FÄRBER *laughs loudly.*)

I may say it's no laughing matter.

FÄRBER. Better laugh than weep. Supposing I'd finished up on the scaffold—who precisely would have paid for the execution? The State?

OFFICIAL. What makes you ask?

FÄRBER. One cannot, as a rule, distrain on the dead.

OFFICIAL. It's matter for the heirs. It's all in order.

FÄRBER. A superb system. A system to be proud of.

OFFICIAL. I'm only an official.

FÄRBER. Well, as an official you can present my bill to the State. The destruction of my honour, my practice, my family, my health.

Compensation for false witness, false accusation, false imprisonment for five years. And various inconsiderable oddments, such as suffering, mental and physical; oppression; the thousand and one torments of every day and every night. You will find that all the money in the world would be insufficient to meet my legitimate demands.

OFFICIAL. I'm not responsible for that.

FÄRBER. Then who the blazes is responsible for injustice? Who is responsible for the thefts and murders and thousand and one other crimes of the State?

OFFICIAL. That's a political matter, sir. I'm not allowed to discuss politics.

FÄRBER. You'll have to distrain. I haven't got the money.

OFFICIAL. You forget the compensation money, sir. Seventeen thousand five hundred marks.

FÄRBER. And how much is left to me, if I pay?

OFFICIAL. There is still the seventeen thousand five hundred marks of the lady.

FÄRBER. Very generous, I'm sure.

OFFICIAL. Well, here is the account, sir. And now I'll disturb you no more. Good-bye, sir, and good luck.

(*He goes.*)

FÄRBER. Anna, you're right! To hell with everybody! It's summer-time. We're free, in our own house. The earth's as lovely as it was before and we love each other.

(*They both sit down on a seat.*)

ANNA. Do you know that I all but betrayed you in there?

FÄRBER. You too?

ANNA. When I felt I couldn't stand it any more I wanted to push all the blame on to your shoulders just to be free myself.

FÄRBER. And I was on the verge of murder. Did you have men for warders?

ANNA. No. Why?

FÄRBER. One of the prisoners said you did. I nearly went mad with jealousy.

ANNA. But now everything is all right; isn't it?

FÄRBER. Everything. We'll begin where we left off. I'll soon have my practice back, and a decent bank balance. You'll be helping me. And we will forget.

ANNA. We shall never forget.

FÄRBER. We must forget. Are we responsible for all the injustice in the world? Haven't we earned our freedom hardly enough already? Haven't we the right to live peacefully and unthinkingly from day to day? We've suffered enough.

ANNA. Too much. That's why. It happens to so many, and nobody knows. So many are crying out, and nobody hears.

FÄRBER. What can we do?

ANNA. We cannot be silent.

FÄRBER. Rhetoric! It's our duty to think of ourselves a bit.

ANNA. Rhetoric, you say? When you were in prison, you said, you wanted to kill yourself . . . more rhetoric?

FÄRBER. Why must you throw a moment of weakness in my teeth?

ANNA. I throw nothing in your teeth.

FÄRBER. You accused me of weakness even in public, at the preliminary inquiry.

ANNA (*turning away*). Franz!

FÄRBER. That's no answer.

ANNA. Leave well alone.

FÄRBER. Did you accuse me of weakness, or not?

ANNA. Why are you asking this?

FÄRBER. So you refuse to answer?

ANNA. You know the answer.

FÄRBER. I am weak!

ANNA. Yes. You haven't changed. You think always of yourself, of your business, of your bank balance, of your own personal comfort. Haven't these dreadful years made you see differently? Do you really believe that we can begin again just where we left off? I know that I haven't the right to go on living as I did—for myself, for you, for your bank balance.

FÄRBER. What's been putting these morbid ideas into your head?

ANNA. Prison.

FÄRBER. Your nerves are all jangled—obviously. Your nerves. But you'll soon be better—rest and quiet, and good country milk and butter and green-stuff. You'll soon be better.

ANNA. We are at cross-purposes.

FÄRBER. Nonsense. Let's bury the past. Come and kiss me. We have so much to make up for. So many days, so many nights . . .

ANNA. Leave me alone.

FÄRBER. But, my dear—I must hold you. I could hold you in my arms for ever.

ANNA. Leave me alone. It's impossible.

FÄRBER. You won't let me touch you?

ANNA. No, no . . . but not just now.

FÄRBER. Why not now?

ANNA. Don't torture me.

FÄRBER. What on earth's the matter with you?

ANNA. Don't ask me, please.

FÄRBER. But what is it? First you fall on my neck and then you sit and refuse even to speak to me—you look so funny. You look so cold.

ANNA. Please . . .

FÄRBER. For God's sake say something.

ANNA. All these years I have thought of this moment with longing and delight . . . of the time when we two should live together. Together in the same room. Sleeping in the same bed. With the patients coming every day, and you healing them and me doing your accounts. With you earning the money and me taking it to the bank.

FÄRBER. But why all this? We love each other—we shall always love each other.

ANNA. Do you think so?

FÄRBER. Haven't you said so yourself?

ANNA. It wasn't true.

FÄRBER. I don't understand.

ANNA. I don't understand either—but there it is.

FÄRBER. Don't you still love me?

ANNA. I'm still with you.

FÄRBER. What do you mean? Of course you are still with me.

ANNA. Isn't that enough for you?

FÄRBER. I've got to know, Anna—do you still love me?

ANNA. I implore you—leave me alone.

FÄRBER. Do you love me? Yes or no?

ANNA. Franz!

FÄRBER. Do you belong to me? Yes or no?

ANNA (*breaking out*). I can't bear you—I can't bear you. It's all over. I can't bear you to touch me, I can't bear you near me. . . . Everything you do, everything you say . . .

(*There is a silence.*)

FÄRBER. I failed to notice anything of that last night.

ANNA. I'd dreamt of that—for years I'd dreamt of that. When it grew dark, and the sky was grey and comfortless and I lay on the prison bench, so cold, I saw you naked and ached for your warmth. And when you really came to me, and lay down beside me, my blood froze with loneliness and repulsion. I couldn't understand it. I refused to believe my own feelings; I tried to drug myself, to deceive myself. . . . It was no use. I hate the room we shall live in together, the bed we shall sleep in together. . . . A new prison, a new cell, a new chain.

FÄRBER. But what else have you held out for all these years?

ANNA. I held out for this. But the prison was stronger.

FÄRBER. If a thing had a meaning yesterday, can it be meaningless to-day?

ANNA. Yes. Even an emotion can have its day and die, like a word.

(*There is a silence.*)

FÄRBER. Where are you going?

ANNA. Anywhere.

FÄRBER. What will you do?

ANNA. I only know what I cannot do. One day I shall know what I can do. Good-bye, Franz. . . . I have loved you very, very dearly. . . . I loved you so much that I really could have killed your wife.

(ANNA *goes.* *In the distance can be heard the strains of the* CHILDREN'S *song :* "*All's well that ends well.*"

CURTAIN

DRAW THE FIRES!

An Historical Play, translated by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

To the Memory of the Sailors
KÖBIS and REICHPIETSCH
who were shot on the 5th September, 1917

CHARACTERS

Köbis
Reichpietsch
Sachse
Beckers
Weber
Fischer
Neumann
Roddei
Plage
Martin
Friedrichs
Holters
Merten
Sander
Brauner
Bieber
Linke
Dames
Reister
(Stokers and Seamen of the German Navy)

Petty-Officer Purzelmann
Other Seamen, Stokers, Petty-Officers
Admiral von Scheer
First Lieutenant Kohler
Second Lieutenant Hoffmann
Adjutant
Other Officers
Schuler (A Military Lawyer)
President of the Court Martial
Three Counsel for Defence
Herr Reichpietsch
Frau Reichpietsch
Anna Köbis
Lucie
Master-at-Arms
Priest
Warder
Dittmann
Scheidemann
Moos
Luise Zietz
(Reichstag Deputies)
Leading Stoker Simpf
Reichstag Servant

The Action takes place at Jutland, Wilhelmshaven, Rüstersiel, Kiel and Berlin in the years 1917–18–19.

DRAW THE FIRES!

SCENE ONE

Summer, 1926. *German Reichstag.*

Committee of Inquiry. DEPUTIES *seated at a table.* (*This scene can be played in front of the curtain.*)

CHAIRMAN (DEPUTY MOOS). Before proceeding with the business of the day it is my duty to make it clear that this inquiry is not concerned with examining the findings of the Court Martial held in connection with the Naval revolt of 1917. It is not our task to decide whether the sentences were legally valid or not.

VOICE FROM THE WINGS. That's our job!

CHAIRMAN. We are concerned solely with establishing to what extent these disturbances originated in the Navy. I call upon Leading Stoker Simpf of the *Helgoland.*

SIMPF. Well, first of all, that wretched trial achieved what mere agitation had never been able to achieve. By the time it was finished we had all lost whatever confidence we may have had in the officers and the high command. We realized for the first time just what we were in their eyes—nothing but coolies and galley-slaves. It was a black day in the history of German military justice. Ever since, I've always felt that if there is still justice on this earth these men, who, as far as I know, were acting entirely out of love for their Fatherland, will be publicly vindicated. It's we who've enjoyed the fruits of their sacrifices. After the trial the food, for instance, was definitely better. The officers themselves knew that it was the trial which first made the men as a whole rebellious.

CHAIRMAN. The witnesses, Beckers, Sachse and Weber are all present. We will begin with the Battle of Jutland. . . .

Darkness.

SCENE TWO

31*st May*, 1916. *Battle of Jutland.*

Boiler-room of the Prinzregent Luitpold, *divided into three compartments by armoured bulk-heads. Right and left: narrow steel ladders.*

In each stoke-hole a boiler with great furnace-doors: ash-traps; pressure-gauge; water-gauge; ejectors. On the bulk-heads, speaking-tubes with whistles, and telephones.

In the centre stoke-hole : engine-room telegraph with pointer indicating speed and number of revolutions. Chutes lead down to the furnaces from the coal bunkers above.

Port Stoke-hole :
SACHSE
KÖBIS
FISCHER

Midships Stoke-hole :
PETTY-OFFICER PURZELMANN (*on the platform at the engine-room speaking-tube*)
BECKERS
WEBER
NEUMANN

Starboard Stoke-hole :
RODDEI
PLAGE
MARTIN

PORT STOKE-HOLE

SACHSE (*humming*). " Ingenol, oh, Ingenol, buy yourself a pistol." . . . Bloody swindle ! That's what I call it. Did you hear what they yelled after us at Schlicktau ?—" Our Fatherland peacefully weathers the storm, With the Grand Fleet asleep in the harbour so warm ! "

KÖBIS. Don't you believe it, Willy—the old man's got something up his sleeve all right, you bet your life on it !

FISCHER. Mates, there's something in the air ! My big toe tells me so—it's worse than the bloody jaw-ache. About time too ! My behind is wearing thin with sitting down and doing damn all !

STARBOARD STOKE-HOLE

RODDEI. First leaf I'd had, and the bloody telegram comes on the second day out. I went after Minna in the kitchen. " Minna," I says ; " I've got to go back," says I. " Oh Henry," she says. " Come on," I says, " kiss me." She says : " What if the mistress comes ? " " She can bloody well stand by and look on," says I . . .

PLAGE. Go on with you ! You didn't get like that just with kissing !

MARTIN. Women, Hell ! . . . Give me extra scran every time—like to-day ! White bread and butter—you can keep your skirts and welcome !

MIDSHIPS STOKE-HOLE

PETTY-OFFICER. Come on there, Beckers ! None of your old soldier games !

BECKERS. Purzelmann's been at the bottle again.

WEBER. He's been broaching a bloody cask, if you ask me !

NEUMANN. Give us a draw, Hans.

BECKERS. He's the laziest bastard in the bloody fleet, old bloody Purzelmann!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Action stations! Action stations!

PETTY-OFFICER. Action stations!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Code word Frederick the Great!

KÖBIS. We're for it, Willy!

FISCHER. My big toe—what did I tell you? Bloody well time, too!

(*Bells.*)

BECKERS. Coal-oh!

SACHSE (*to the bunker-men*). Coal-oh! Coal-oh!

PETTY-OFFICER. Fans!

(*The Ventilator-fans begin to whine.*)

SPEAKING-TUBES. Course East-south-east!

WEBER. That's England, that is!

PETTY-OFFICER. Man the pumps!

(*Ashes are pumped out*).

SPEAKING-TUBES. Engines 120 revs.

PETTY-OFFICER. Engines 120 revs.

TELEPHONIST. Steam-pressure?

PETTY-OFFICER. Steam-pressure?

WEBER. Fifteen.

KÖBIS. Thirteen.

RODDEI. Fifteen.

PETTY-OFFICER. Fifteen atmospheres!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Fifteen atmospheres!

PETTY-OFFICER. Put your backs into it!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Stop centre engine!

PETTY-OFFICER. Stop centre engine!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Full ahead all engines! Fans 270!

PETTY-OFFICER. Full ahead all engines!

TELEPHONIST. Steam-pressure?

PETTY-OFFICER. Steam-pressure?

CRIES. Fifteen! Fifteen! Fifteen!

PETTY-OFFICER. Fifteen atmospheres!

(*Lamps flash out.*)

BUNKER-HANDS (*at the chute*). Mind your backs! Coal-oh!

RODDEI. Get us some water!

MARTIN. Coming over!

PETTY-OFFICER. Come on there! This isn't marbles!

(*Furnace doors shut—darkness; open—light.*)

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Full ahead port engine! Slow starboard! Stop all engines!

PETTY-OFFICER. Full ahead port! Slow starboard! Stop all engines!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Full astern all!

WEBER. We're for it, mates!

SPEAKING-TUBES. Course—North-north-east!

PETTY-OFFICER. Come on! Don't stand there gossiping!

SACHSE. Where the bloody hell are we?

SPEAKING-TUBES. Turret *Berta* cleared? . . . *Berta* cleared! *Cæsar* cleared? . . . *Cæsar* cleared! . . . *Dora* cleared? . . . *Dora* cleared! . . . *Berta, Cæsar, Dora* cleared!

TELEPHONIST. Code word Frederick the Great!

KÖBIS. What price your fire?

SACHSE. There's a bleeding great holiday in yours!

BECKERS. Your steam's dropping!

WEBER. Your water's down!

PETTY-OFFICER. None of that mucking about! Get on with it!

BECKERS. That bastard's getting above himself!

ALL (*singing*). Hummel, Hummel, Hummel . . . *Weiber her, Weiber her!* . . .

SPEAKING-TUBES. Five degrees up. Range one nine ought ought ought. Twenty-two red. Salvo!

(*Bells.*)

ALL (*counting softly*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

SPEAKING-TUBES. Four degrees up. Range one five ought ought ought. Eleven red. Salvo!

(*Bells.*)

ALL (*counting softly*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

TELEPHONIST. Code word Frederick the Great . . . Utmost speed ahead all engines!

RODDEI. Stick it up behind!

KÖBIS. Water here!

IN THE COAL BUNKER.

FRIEDRICHS. Anyone'd think the bitches had never seen coal in their lives before!

HOLTERS. Four baskets . . . five baskets . . . twenty-six baskets . . .

(*Baskets on a travelling belt.*)

FRIEDRICHS. Number three outer bunker empty . . . number four inner bunker broached . . . Jan . . . Jan . . . Has he copped a packet? . . . Jan's copped a packet! . . . Pass the word!

MERTEN. Jan's copped a packet!

PETTY-OFFICER. Substitute for Jan!

SPEAKING-TUBES. Four degrees up! Range one two ought ought ought. Three red. Salvo!

(*Bells.*)

ALL (*counting softly*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

SPEAKING-TUBES. *König* sheering out of line!

RODDEI. Drop of leaf for them! Lucky bastards!

SPEAKING-TUBES. Three degrees up. Range nine ought ought ought. Two green.

(*Bells.*)

ALL (*counting softly*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

KÖBIS. Your fire's not white enough.

SPEAKING-TUBES. Enemy battleship in flames.

CRIES. Hurrah!

SPEAKING-TUBES. Three degrees up. Range seven ought ought ought. Eight green. Salvo!

(*Bells.*)

ALL (*counting softly*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

SPEAKING-TUBES. Enemy cruiser sheering out of line!

WEBER. Give her bloody hell!

CRIES. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

(*Explosion.*)

SPEAKING-TUBES. Turret *Cæsar* out of action!

FISCHER. God damn the swine!

(*Tremendous Explosion.*)

(*Searing flame in the Starboard Stoke-hole. All brilliantly lit up for a second. Then darkness. Groans.*)

KÖBIS. What the hell?!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Direct hit . . . After funnel!

BECKERS. Well, mates, here we go down!

WEBER. Bloody funny, aren't you ? !
BECKERS. Just look at old Purzelmann !
NEUMANN. He's got the wind up good and proper !
WEBER. Shaking like a bloody jelly !
PETTY-OFFICER (*at speaking-tube*). Starboard stoke-hole clear ?

(*No answer.*)

Starboard stoke-hole clear ?

(*No answer.*)

(*To telephonist*) Number one starboard stoke-hole out of action !
SPEAKING-TUBES. Number one starboard stoke-hole out of action ! Number one starboard stoke-hole clear ?
TELEPHONE. Number one starboard stoke-hole out of action. Three casualties.
SPEAKING-TUBES. Three degrees up. Range nine ought ought ought. Twelve green. Salvo !
ALL (*softly counting*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

KÖBIS. Hell ! . . . Where's that bloody first-aid box ?
PETTY-OFFICER. Number one starboard stoke-hole—first aid !
SPEAKING-TUBES. *Seydlitz* lost touch with the enemy . . . Four degrees up. One one five ought ought. Fourteen green. Salvo !

(*Bells.*)

ALL (*counting softly*). Twenty-one . . . Twenty-two . . . Twenty-three . . .

(*Detonation.*)

TELEPHONIST. First aid coming ! Relief coming !

(*Knocking. Bolts drawn.* MEN *with stretchers.* RELIEFS. ENGINEER. FIRST LIEUTENANT KOHLER.)

KOHLER. 'Afternoon, men.

(*No answer.*)

Well done . . .

(*Door to the Starboard Stoke-hole is opened.* MEN *with lanterns search the floor. Two* MEN *burnt. One* MAN *groaning heavily.*)

RODDEL. Oh . . . oh . . . water—water . . .
KOHLER. Here you are, my man.
RODDEL. Water—more water . . . oh . . . go easy with my leg . . (*crying out.*) Easy, you clumsy son of a bitch !
KOHLER. Easy with him there . . . wait . . . I'll help get him out . . .

STRETCHER-BEARER. It's all U.P. with his legs.

RODDEI. I says to her, "Minna," I says. "I've got to go back." . . . "Oh Henry," she says . . . "into bed with you, Minna," I says . . . she says . . . she says . . . I don't want to die! I don't want to die! . . . Women! . . . It's women I want! . . . I don't want to die. . . .

(RODDEI *is carried out.*)

KOHLER. The Captain thanks you all for your gallantry. From now on the German ensign rules the seas. It has been a splendid victory, and you have done honour to your Emperor . . . Extra rations will be issued to-day . . . Well done!

ALL. Thank you, sir.

BECKERS. Nice bloke, he is.

(ENGINEER *and* FIRST LIEUTENANT *go.*)

SPEAKING-TUBES. Course North-north-west.

KÖBIS (*to* REICHPIETSCH, *who has come in*). Where the hell have you sprung from?

REICHPIETSCH. Magazine messenger. Thought I'd have a dekko at you.

PETTY-OFFICER. Number one stoke-hole clear!

TELEPHONIST. Number one stoke-hole clear!

KÖBIS. What's it like up there?

REICHPIETSCH. The old man's scared stiff. Von Scheer's in hiding. All properly mucked up, it is. Sticky sight, I can tell you.

(*Explosion.*)

I'd better go up now.

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Code word Frederick the Great. . . . Steam-pressure?

PETTY-OFFICER. Thirteen atmospheres. . . . Come on there! Come on!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Stop all engines. Full astern.

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Stop all engines. Full ahead! Fleet line ahead!

SACHSE. Now for the dockyard wall!

SPEAKING-TUBES. Course East-south-east!

KÖBIS. Well, who's won, if any?

WEBER. Who else but us?

SPEAKING-TUBES. Enemy fleet crippled in retirement. All touch with enemy lost.

ALL. Hurrah!

WEBER. Got any twist, Hans?

BECKERS. Only enough for one—and that's booked.

PETTY-OFFICER. Come on there! None of that!

CRIES. Stick it up and keep it!

BECKERS. Steady there! Steady! Officers are bleeding officers again!

PETTY-OFFICER. You're on duty now, remember! Not in your Schlicktau brothel!

BECKERS. He's found his tongue again, the ruddy bastard!

Darkness.

SCENE THREE

June, 1917. German Reichstag.

Corridor outside Room 12. DEPUTIES *stroll up and down deep in conversation, carrying portfolios.*

VOICES. "And then I said to him, 'Your Excellency, if only you'd listen to what I have to say' . . ."

"I tell you it's not budgeted for, my friend. If the estimates exceed . . ."

"Let us talk it over in the restaurant. If you will give your support for this motion we'll guarantee in return our backing for your Paragraph 7 amendment . . ."

"You and your Liebknecht! I tell you, the man was a pathological all his life. Anybody who couldn't see that five years ago . . ."

"I have a relative in Sofia who has cousins in London. And they wrote to him through an acquaintance in Berne . . ."

"I know, I know. But you might just as well talk to a blank wall as to Bethmann. I prophesied this months ago . . ."

"Couldn't you let me have another two dozen eggs? My wife was delighted with the last lot you sent us. And the ham was a real luxury for us both . . ."

(FOOTMAN *shows* REICHPIETSCH *and* SACHSE *in.*)

FOOTMAN. You can't come any further yet. You must wait here. There's an important conference going on.

(FOOTMAN *goes into Room* 12.)

SACHSE. Jutland in the Reichstag! . . . Oh boy!

REICHPIETSCH. Look—there's a ruddy General. Watch him walk!

SACHSE. This lot doesn't look as though it's fed on jam and turnips!

REICHPIETSCH. I'd like to know what they get paid.

SACHSE. They're not paid by the day like us. They get a salary.

REICHPIETSCH. There's one with the Iron Cross on a white ribbon.

SACHSE. For valour! I don't think!

(FOOTMAN *comes out with* SCHEIDEMANN.)

FOOTMAN. These are the men, sir.

SCHEIDEMANN. What can I do for you?

REICHPIETSCH. There are one or two things we should like to speak to you about, sir.

SCHEIDEMANN. My time is limited. Who are you?

REICHPIETSCH. Max Reichpietsch.

SACHSE. Willy Sachse . . . Something's got to be done about us in the Navy, sir.

SCHEIDEMANN. You're Social Democrats?

SACHSE. Since 1914.

SCHEIDEMANN. Well, what are your complaints?

REICHPIETSCH. There's plenty to talk about. To begin with, the food.

SCHEIDEMANN. Wouldn't it be more satisfactory to let me have your complaints in writing?

REICHPIETSCH. And then there's the way the officers treat us. The drill's worse than it was in peace-time. The officers . . .

SACHSE. It's a bad business, sir. You ought to let them have it hot and strong in the Reichstag. They're leading you right up the garden, sir. You can't believe a word they say. "Our Navy is useless. It can't do anything." The old, old story . . . But what about the *Ariadne* and the *Mainz*? . . . They went down simply because the English guns outranged them. And the *Lützow*? . . After Jutland they took her in tow because she'd been so badly knocked about. Then the Zepp wirelessed that some English destroyers were cruising round. And because of that we torpedoed our own ship, although there were twenty-one men left below. They went down with the ship. Sent to a so-called hero's death by their own comrades. And then they expect us to believe in the officers!

SCHEIDEMANN. Have you personally taken part in a sea-fight?

REICHPIETSCH. Of course we have. Dogger Bank and Jutland . . . If you won't help us we'll have to help ourselves.

SACHSE. Cut through the cutter tackle, and throw the breech-blocks overboard.

SCHEIDEMANN. Are you mad?! Do you realize you're talking treason? Get it out of your heads at once! Do you want to play into the hands of your opponents? Because that's the way to do it! . . . Believe me, I can understand your resentment. It's just that simple men can't always follow strategy . . . I shall certainly make a point of looking into your complaints; and if there is a grain of truth in what you say you may rest assured that I will bring it up at the Budget conference.

REICHPIETSCH. Liebknecht was right when he said . . .

SCHEIDEMANN. You should not take Liebknecht too seriously. Meanwhile get back to your ship and don't do anything foolish . . . It shall be properly inquired into . . . Coming this minute . . .

(*He joins the others.* DEPUTIES *stroll up and down.*)

VOICES. "And then I said to him: 'Your Excellency, if only you'd listen to what I have to say' . . ."

"I tell you it's not budgeted for, my friend. If the estimates exceed . . ."

" Let us talk it over in the restaurant. If you will give us your support for this motion, we'll guarantee our backing in return for your Paragraph 7 amendment . . ."

" You and your Liebknecht ! I tell you, the man's been pathological all his life. Anybody who couldn't see that five years ago . . ."

REICHPIETSCH. Now we'll try the Opposition. They'll help us for sure.

SACHSE. There's one of them. I've seen his picture in the papers. (*Calling after him.*) Sir !

(DITTMANN *turns and sees them.*)

REICHPIETSCH *and* SACHSE *enter into conversation with him.* DEPUTIES *stroll up and down.*)

VOICES. " I have a cousin in Sofia who has relatives in London. And they wrote to him through a mutual acquaintance in Berne . . ."

" I know, I know. But you might just as well talk to a blank wall as to Bethmann. I prophesied this to you months ago . . ."

" Couldn't you let me have another two dozen eggs ? My wife was delighted with the last lot you sent us. And the ham was a real luxury for us both . . ."

DITTMANN (*reading a paper which* REICHPIETSCH *has handed him*). " Order to the Fleet : The reading of Socialist newspapers and books is forbidden. Signed, Bachmann." . . . This is illegal. I'll have the man responsible for this hauled over the coals. Are the Socialist papers much read in the Navy ?

SACHSE. Some of us subscribe to *Vorwärts* ; but most of us read the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*.

REICHPIETSCH. That's the best of the lot. It has the courage to speak out. It says what we are all thinking.

DITTMANN. Do you belong to the Independent Socialist Party ?

REICHPIETSCH. I've wanted to join for a long time. Lots of us have.

DITTMANN. You must talk to Frau Zietz about that. She'll be along in a minute.

SACHSE. What ought we to do ?

DITTMANN. What ought you to do ? Well, in the first place you must go warily.

REICHPIETSCH. If only the whole swindle would come to an end !

DITTMANN. We are going to meet our colleagues from abroad at Stockholm. If the Government can't find a formula for peace, we shall have to do it ourselves. We need your confidence, my friends. And as for you—you must get busy, and at the same time remember that there are such things as Court Martials . . . Ah ! Here is Frau Zietz. . . . Here are two sailors who sympathize with the I.S.P., Frau Zietz. Just think—they say that the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* is the most popular paper in the Navy.

LUISE ZIETZ. You're all splendid fellows. You put the workers in the docks to shame. We've scarcely a dozen supporters there.

REICHPIETSCH. We'd very much like to take a few pamphlets back with us.

LUISE ZIETZ. I'll see that you have all you want.

(SACHSE *and* REICHPIETSCH *go.*)

REICHPIETSCH (*as they go*). There's real people for you. They'll help us all right. You can tell it from the way they talked.

(DEPUTIES *stroll up and down.*)

VOICES. "And then I said to him; 'Your Excellency, if only you'd listen to what I have to say' . . ."

"I tell you it's not budgeted for, my friend. If the estimates exceed . . ."

"Let us talk it over in the restaurant. If you will give us your support for this motion, we'll guarantee in return our backing for your Paragraph 7 amendment . . ."

"You and your Liebknecht! I tell you, the man's been pathological all his life. Anybody who couldn't see that five years ago . . ."

"I have a cousin in Sofia who has relatives in London. And they wrote to him through a mutual acquaintance in Berne . . ."

"I know, I know. But you might just as well talk to a blank wall as to Bethmann. I prophesied this months ago . . ."

"Couldn't you let me have another two dozen eggs? My wife was delighted with the last lot you sent us. And the ham was a real luxury for us both . . ."

Darkness.

SCENE FOUR

July, 1917. Wilhelmshaven.

Casemate deck. Slung from the deck above are benches and tables. At one side, in the convex upper deck, a hatchway about eight feet square, approached by a steel ladder. Through this hatchway one sees the sky and part of a mast. On the far bulk-head an oval plate bolted into place. KÖBIS *runs in from the boiler-room, dirty and grimy.*

MEN (*singing*). "Jam, jam, apricot jam
Is better than pudding or mutton or ham!"

BECKERS. Posh yourself up, Alwin—time for inspection!

KÖBIS. Hell!—There's bags of time yet.

PETTY-OFFICER (*enters and pipes*). Fall in for inspection!

(*The* STOKERS *fall in with a good deal of subdued murmuring.*)

(*To* KÖBIS, *who is the last to fall in*). If you carry on like this you won't get your cap-band back in a hurry, I can tell you! . . . Attention! By the right, dress! Eyes front! From the left, number!

STOKERS. One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine . . . ten . . . eleven . . . twelve . . .

PETTY-OFFICER. Stand at ease!

SACHSE. He's after the bleeding Iron Cross, he is!

(LIEUTENANT HOFFMANN *enters.*)

PETTY-OFFICER. Attention! Second sub. of port watch for inspection, sir!

HOFFMANN. Very good.

PETTY-OFFICER. Stand at ease!

HOFFMANN. Odd numbers, one pace forward! (*Between the ranks.*) Bend down, you . . . Show your feet . . . Up with that leg! Higher! . . . Have you washed to-day?

BECKERS. Yes, sir.

HOFFMANN. Well, you can wash again! Put on your number 3 uniform! (*To another.*) Hold out your hands . . . (*To* KÖBIS.) Lift up your arm! . . . It's filthy enough to grow carrots in! Have you washed to-day?

KÖBIS. No, sir, I haven't got any more soap. No more issued.

HOFFMANN. Wash yourself with sand, then!

(*Murmuring.*)

Who spoke then?

KÖBIS. We've had our rations cut down, sir. We used to get as much soap as we could use, and . . .

HOFFMANN. Well, and?

KÖBIS. I don't wash for fun, sir, but even a stoker likes to clean himself up once in a way . . .

HOFFMANN. You'll have to make do as best you can. Soap is a life-and-death matter in Germany to-day. Our country is ringed round by enemies, and anyone who wastes soap in difficult times like these is a traitor to his country!

(REICHPIETSCH *suddenly dashes in, checks himself at the sight of* HOFFMANN *and turns tail.*)

Well, what the hell do you want?

REICHPIETSCH. I came to speak to a mate, sir.

HOFFMANN. Get out of here! Go aloft and come back and report to me!

(REICHPIETSCH *obeys.*)

Slovenly crowd you've got here, Petty-Officer! Put 'em to work! Squad drill!

PETTY-OFFICER. Very good, sir! . . . Stand at ease! Attention! . . . Knees bend! . . . Lower there! . . . Stick your stomach in, you! . . . Keep erect! . . . Up! . . . Attention! . . . Down on your bellies! . . . Up! . . . Down! . . . Up! . . . Down! . . . Up!

REICHPIETSCH (*dirty, with lacerated hands, re-enters*). Able seaman Reichpietsch back from aloft, sir!

HOFFMANN. Good! Now get out! . . . You—odd numbers back one pace! (*They obey.*) Yesterday a number of men asked for more bread. There is no more bread, whether you are hungry or not. If any of you starve I can guarantee you a first-class funeral with full naval honours (PETTY-OFFICER *laughs.*) This is no laughing matter! I'm serious. Your families at home have even less to eat than you, and your friends in Flanders would be only too glad to get the same as you. . . . It was also reported to me that yesterday you all left your dinner untouched. That's damned nearly mutiny!

(*Murmurs.*)

Well, have you anything to say?

KÖBIS. The dried fish was crawling with maggots, sir. It stank the whole ship out.

HOFFMANN. What do you expect in war-time? Roast duck and green peas? . . . If you've nothing better to say than that you'd do well to hold your tongue! I tasted the food myself, and the surgeon passed it as A.1. If the potatoes were a little sweet it was because the frost had caught them. I've closed my eyes to what's been going on here long enough, but I'll give you a warning—all of you; but the old hands in particular—the Captain wouldn't think twice of sending the whole lot of you home in disgrace, even those who've done their six years. You're all getting out of hand because you've nothing to do. But I'll have no slackness in this ship. Yesterday, for instance, you were all drunk—your rum ration will be suspended. . . . Petty-Officer, read out the Orders to the Fleet.

PETTY-OFFICER. Paragraph 1. "Ever mindful of his high calling to protect Throne and Fatherland every seaman must strive zealously to fulfil his duties."

Paragraph 2. "The first duty of every seaman is to preserve unswerving loyalty to his Oath of Allegiance."

Paragraph 3. "Every upright, brave and honourable seaman is assured of the care and good will of his superiors."

Paragraph 4. "Every seaman should realize that through his own skill and industry he may rise to the highest positions."

Paragraph 5. "On the other hand, any seaman who fails in his duty will be punished accordingly. Minor offences will be met with disciplinary punishment; serious offences will be Court-Martialled. Punishments at the disposition of the Court Martial include detentive arrest, fortress imprisonment, penal servitude, and, in the last resort, death. In time of war all punishments will be intensified" . . .

HOFFMANN. That will do . . . Defaulters and request men!

PETTY-OFFICER. Leading-stoker Beckers overstayed leave by two days.

HOFFMANN. Leave overstayed?! In war-time! Do you realize this is treason?! What have you to say for yourself?

BECKERS. I got a telegram saying my father was dead. Then when I got home I found that he'd been drowned in the harbour; it was two

days before his body was washed ashore. I'd only three days' leave, and I thought it would be all right for me to stay for the funeral. . . .

HOFFMANN. So you "thought," did you? It's not your business to think. Even if your mother had died as well. Fourteen days' close arrest. . . . Next?

WEBER. I need some new trousers, sir.

HOFFMANN. New trousers? . . . You can use a needle, can't you? Patch up the ones you've got!

HOLTERS. I wish to apply for shore leave, sir.

HOFFMANN. Shore leave? . . . You're getting a bit above yourself, aren't you? . . . All right.

PETTY-OFFICER. Report on board by ten o'clock.

(*Piping off.*)

BO'SUN (*passing the open door*). Tables and benches! Tables and benches!

HOFFMANN. Dismiss the watch.

PETTY-OFFICER. Attention!

(HOFFMANN *goes.*)

Fall out!

(*The tables and benches are lowered from above. One* MAN *goes to the galley with a pile of plates. Another doles out knives and forks.*)

BECKERS. Dirty swab! . . . He's no more than nineteen if he's a day!

SACHSE. I'd like to see him next time the English give us hell!

WEBER. What did they want to put old Kohler into the U-boats for and give us this little scut in his place? Old Kohler had a bit more savvy than this goddamned order-you-about drill hound! He was a decent bloke, old Kohler was. I shan't forget how he hauled the boys out of that bloody mess at Jutland.

KÖBIS. They can die like us all right, these toffs; but they bloody well can't live like us.

SACHSE. You've said it. It's all a bleeding game for them.

BECKERS. So you're waking up at last, are you? Bloody well time too! We've put up with the bastards a damn sight too long already!

FISCHER. We ought to do like they did in the *König* and chuck the old man into the ditch!

BECKERS. You're never happy, are you! You've got the pictures this afternoon—what more do you want?

SACHSE. What's that we've got this afternoon?

WEBER. The pictures. I've been thinking of them all the morning.

CRIES. What? The pictures?

WEBER. Not half!

CRIES. That's the stuff! Hurrah!

WEBER. I've not forgotten last time yet . . . You remember? . . . The King's mistress . . . Tasty bit of skirt and all!

SACHSE. I'd rather have a slut in my arms than a bleeding queen on the movies—eh?

BECKERS. My bloody oath!

(*Food is brought in.*)

(*To* HOLTERS.) Well, mate, it pays to be chummy with an officer, don't it? Shore leave every day and nice warm company at night! What d'you think?

CRIES. Well, what's the doings?

FRIEDRICHS. What is it this time? . . . Swedes and burgoo.

WEBER. It's all my eyes to say we've no right to have more than the perishers have got at home. What I say is if anybody's got to starve we should all bloody well starve together!

KÖBIS. In the officers' mess patriotism stops at the guts.

FISCHER. We ought to do like they did in the *König* . . .

BECKERS. Oh hell, we ought!

(REICHPIETSCH *enters.*)

CRIES. Up aloft with you! Up aloft!

BECKERS. Here, Max, you've just been aft—what's the doings in the officers' mess?

CRIES. Turnips! Jam! Burgoo!

REICHPIETSCH. I've scrounged one of their bloody menoos. Just reading it's enough to last you a month!

CRIES. Come on, out with it! Cough it up!

REICHPIETSCH. Well, gentlemen—what do you care to order? . . . Hans, your mouth's watering before I've started! Stand by!—Consommé Royale! Poached eggs on spinach, and ham . . .

CRIES. Turnips! Where's the turnips?

REICHPIETSCH. A little patience, gentlemen! A little patience! In this our Fatherland's hour of need even the officers' mess has to look the turnip in its bloody face. Third course—fillet of steak with turnips, in butter—salad, conserve.

(*Laughter.*)

CRIES. What about the bubbly?

REICHPIETSCH. Every time! Pastries, fresh fruit and black coffee. . . . And what will the gentlemen drink? Oh, we have everything—you have only to ask! We Germans can't stand the French, but we guzzle their wine and no mistake. Seven kinds of white wine, four kinds of red, port, sherry, and ten different liqueurs!

(*Laughter and cat-calls.*)

But, of course, gentlemen, down here you don't need liqueurs. You simply wouldn't understand them. Apricot jam's what you want—and plenty of it!

FISCHER. It's the only thing—chuck 'em in the ditch!

KÖBIS. Before Jutland one man was as good as another here . . .
" Equal food and equal pay, And we'd soon chase the war away ! "

(HOLTERS *plays on his mouth-organ.*)

WEBER (*sings*). The war is over and done with, boys,
We're homeward bound at last ;
We've finished with night patrols and such,
And we're making port fast ;
You can cross your thumbs and spit and say
Thank God for dangers past.

ALL (*singing*). But many and many a sailor lad
Is sleeping down below.

WEBER. The Kaiser came to visit us,
The father of our land ;
To every jolly sailor boy
He gave his own right hand ;
And welcome, welcome home, he said,
My noble sailor band.

ALL. But many and many a brother of ours
Lies sleeping down below.

WEBER. They carried up the gunner's mate,
Both arms were gone and both legs too ;
When Kaiser Wilhelm saw him thus
His heart it broke in two ;
My son, my son, ask what you will,
It shall be granted you.

ALL. But all he wanted then was peace
And a long sleep down below.

(*The plates and knives and forks are cleared away.*)

FISCHER. How about a spot of cards ?
NEUMANN. Who'll deal ?
MERTEN. You—for asking damn-fool questions !

(*Others read the newspaper.*)

WEBER. There's old Alwin at his books again ! What do you do it for, mate ? Your bloody old professors haven't done much to stop this muck up . . .

HOLTERS. Get a move on ! We'll all be dead before you've finished shuffling !

KÖBIS. " I expect nothing, I hope for nothing ; I rely on myself alone." Full stop. Finish ! (*He slams the book to.*)

(NEUMANN *deals out the cards.*)

MERTEN. Wake me up when you're finished !

WEBER. That sounds all right. Who's the pen-pusher?

KÖBIS. Max Stirner.

FISCHER. Here's a bloody fine hand! I don't think!

REICHPIETSCH (*reading the paper*). Here you, listen to this! "The proud years of War now lie behind us. Russia has collapsed and we have nothing more to fear from her. The Russians, like all Slavs, are weak in leadership . . ."

MERTEN (*playing a card*). There's a bloody heart for you!

REICHPIETSCH. "France is bleeding to death before our eyes and using foreign troops against us, as the French refuse . . ."

FISCHER. Go on, go on! I won't say anything!

REICHPIETSCH. "Italy is utterly exhausted from the military point of view, and her breaking of her Oath to us, her ignominious attempt to attach herself to the winning side, will mean her ultimate downfall . . ."

NEUMANN. What the bloody hell do you mean by that Ace?

REICHPIETSCH. "There remains, then, only the enemy for whom we reserve our fiercest hatred: Great Britain. And with every day we advance a step nearer to the final overthrow of that proud island which rules the waves . . ."

KÖBIS. In Schlicktau they think we . . .

SACHSE. Oh, we can do bloody well everything, we can do it in our sleep!

REICHPIETSCH. "Every German must swell with pride to think that through all these centuries, despite innumerable demoralizing influences from outside, our great and glorious nation has preserved its fighting spirit . . ."

HOLTERS. We bloody well look it!

REICHPIETSCH. "We know how painful our returning soldiers find the miserable insipidities of the Reichstag. To the German soldier at the front the wretched Scheidemann-peace seems almost unbelievable in its degradation. Our brave Field-greys and Blue-jackets say with one voice: Rather ten more years of war than . . ."

CRIES. Max, shut your mouth! Stick it where it belongs! That bastard's enough to make you puke! He bloody well ought to come out here.

KÖBIS. Who wrote that?

REICHPIETSCH. Special Correspondent—a General von B.F.

KÖBIS. B.F.! About right too!

MERTEN. That's done you in!

HOLTERS. What the hell! Are we playing together or are we not?

MERTEN (*to* FISCHER). What have you got?

FISCHER (*lays his cards on the table*). How's that?

REICHPIETSCH. Here you, listen to this! . . . Forget your bloody cards for a minute! . . . "Berlin, Reichstag. Replying to a question put by Deputy Haase, Dr. Capelle stated that the grievances were quite without foundation. Both in the Army and the Navy, according to

a new decree, commissions are to be set up to control the men's rations."

KÖBIS. Raspberry to you!

SACHSE. Tell that to your grandmother!

WEBER. In the Reichstag we have nothing but the truth! I don't think!

(*Laughter.*)

REICHPIETSCH. I've got it, mates! The old man'll give the job to the officers' batmen!

BECKERS. Who else? Bloody little boot-lickers!

REICHPIETSCH. That's what it is!

BECKERS. We're damned well not going to stand for that!

KÖBIS. We'd better elect our own commission!

REICHPIETSCH. That's the stuff!

WEBER. The bastards have brought it on themselves . . . They say in the Reichstag that commissions will be elected, and so they bloody well shall be elected!

CRIES. Come on then! Get on with the job. We're all here!

KÖBIS. Who do you want to have?

CRIES. Köbis . . . Beckers . . . Sachse . . . Reichpietsch . . . Weber . . .

KÖBIS. Stick up your hands which of you wants Beckers, Sachse, Weber, Reichpietsch, Köbis. . . . Going, going, gone! Beckers, Sachse, Weber, Reichpietsch and Köbis are elected. To-morrow we'll report to the old man.

FISCHER. Now we can get down to business again. . . . Who's going to play?

NEUMANN. Go and play in the corner by yourself! I'm going to be gay.

(*Some begin to play cards, others play mouth-organs and concertinas.*)

REICHPIETSCH (*sings*). The folks ashore are snoring hard
While we are having fun;
But when the ship puts out to sea,
Good Lord, the work that's done!

ALL. Holderi, holdero, holderia, ria, ria, holderia, ha-ha-ha,
Holderi, holdero, holderia, ria, ria, ha-ha-ha!

REICHPIETSCH. With brush and sand and holystone
We polish and we shine,
And every sailor's good right leg
Is working overtime.

Stand up, you lazy lubber,
Stand up and mind your eye;
The Captain's cussing on the bridge,
A-swearing at the sky.

He's looking for a breeze so hard
He comes an awful cropper;
He thinks he sees the Twelve Apostles
And Peter in a topper.

The stewards bring us lovely stew,
They run this way and that;
But the maggots in the meat jump out
And beat the stewards flat.

PETTY-OFFICER. Fall in for coaling! Get a move on there! get a move on!

CRIES. This isn't our watch. We've got shore leave! Shore leave!

PETTY-OFFICER. Any man not fallen in within three minutes will be reported.

(*He goes.*)

BECKERS. Those bloody swine have been at it again. They've been betting which ship can finish coaling first. And the last one has to stand drinks all round.

SACHSE. So we've got to sweat for them to get soused!

KÖBIS. Is this our watch or isn't it? It bloody well is not! We've got shore leave and we'll take it!

CRIES. Hear hear! No bloody coaling for us! Come on, mates, let's get!

NEUMANN. What have we chosen our bloody commission for?

FISCHER. Now's the time for it to show if it's got any guts or not.

WEBER. What the bloody hell has a food commission to do with coaling?

KÖBIS. You're right, mates! This isn't just a matter of extra grub. It's a matter of our rights. If they won't let us go to the pictures we'll all clear off and go for a walk together for one hour on shore. Get me?

CRIES. That's the stuff! With knobs on!

KÖBIS. Well then, go to it!

(*They disappear through the hatchway. The* PETTY-OFFICER *enters.*)

PETTY-OFFICER. God damn your eyes! What the bleeding hell do you think you're doing?! Come back there! Come back, damn you! (*To* KÖBIS.) I've got you anyway!

KÖBIS. It looks as though I'll have to swim.

(*He disappears, and there is the sound of a body falling into the water.*)

PETTY-OFFICER. There goes my bloody leaf!

Darkness.

SCENE FIVE

Some days later. Public-house at Rüstersiel.

In the foreground the bar. From this a great door leads to a large room decorated with red, white and black lanterns and red, white and black paper hangings. At the back of this large room is the "Stage."

LUCIE (*drying glasses and singing to herself*). She sat beneath the willow,
Her baby at her breast;
The night-wind sighed along the lake
And a star shone in the west.

She sat so sad and still,
As pale and still as death;
And the night-wind stirred her raven locks
With a cold and chilling breath . . .

REICHPIETSCH (*at the bar, has sung the second verse with her*). A pint of old and mild, Lucie.

LUCIE. There you are, love.

REICHPIETSCH. Come off it! . . .

LUCIE. Who do you think you're talking to?

REICHPIETSCH. That was all right once, perhaps . . . You've got the officers after you now, though.

LUCIE. Oh, have I, Mr. Know-all? . . . Same again?

REICHPIETSCH. Look slippy then, I'm in a hurry!

LUCIE. Stop a bit longer now you're here.

REICHPIETSCH. You're a faithless hussy, you are!

LUCIE. You've got such smooth soft hair.

REICHPIETSCH. I'm like that all over.

LUCIE. You're a pig, you are!

REICHPIETSCH. Well, have you . . . what have you been up to lately, Lucie?

LUCIE. If you really want to know I'm getting married.

REICHPIETSCH. Good luck to you! . . . Who've you caught?

LUCIE. He's been invalided out. Got a nice job, too.

REICHPIETSCH. Flown high, haven't you? No room for us poor devils now!

LUCIE. Won't you take me out again, Max?

REICHPIETSCH. Me? What, have you quarrelled with him already?

LUCIE. You've got such nice hair, Max.

REICHPIETSCH. That'll do! Here's how!

A VOICE. We want you here, Max!

(REICHPIETSCH *goes into the large room.* DAMES *enters the bar.*)

DAMES. 'Afternoon, miss.

LUCIE. 'Afternoon.

DAMES. Was that Reichpietsch?

LUCIE. It was.
DAMES. Are there a lot of them in there?
LUCIE. Yes.
DAMES. Been there long?
LUCIE. Yes.
DAMES. Köbis in there too?
LUCIE. Look here, are you trying to pump me? Because if so, what for?
DAMES. Only this . . . (*He clutches* LUCIE.) . . . Well, what about it—you . . .
LUCIE. You keep your hands to yourself or I'll give you something to remember.
DAMES. All right, all right . . . nice bloke, old Reichpietsch, isn't he? . . . I must go in. They're waiting for me.

(*He goes.*)

IN THE HALL

KÖBIS (*on the dais*). Comrades! Two days ago the third watch should have had shore leave. At the last moment the order came through—fall in for coaling! And why? Simply because the God-Almighty officers had got a bet on as to who'd finish coaling first! I ask you! We had to sweat our guts out for their fun. We kicked up hell, and the old man hauled a few of us up at random and locked 'em up. And now six hundred of us are damn well going to back them up. That's why we're here!
SACHSE. Mates! We may be sailor-boys at the moment, but first and foremost we're workers. Before this ruddy War we were packers, metal-workers, railwaymen and anything you can damn well think of. And when it's all over we'll go back to being packers and metal-workers and railway-men. Back to our own jobs. With the officers, now, it's different. War's their trade. It's not patriotism at all with them. If it was they'd be ashamed of getting big money and filling their bellies at their country's expense. It's their trade, and they get all they bloody well can out of it! Is that right or is it not?
CRIES. Sure it's right!
BECKERS. Look at it this way—you, Hein: you've got a missus and four kids in Leipzig and the old man's got a missus and kids in Kiel. You're fighting for your lot in Leipzig, and the old man's fighting for his bunch in Kiel. Your wife can sing "*Deutschland über alles*" just as loud as the old man's missus herself. But singing doesn't take her very far. It boils down to what she's got in the larder. Whether the kitchen smells of roast meat or turnips. That's the crux of the matter.
REICHPIETSCH. Mates! Last week a bloke called Herre, a journalist on the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, told us a thing or two about the war between Austria and Serbia. He said how it really began. It was damn all, I can tell you. Just because the Hungarian landowners wouldn't let

in cheap pork and cheap vegetables. I tell you, I'm a Christian. I believe in God and a future life. And I say give the Kaiser what belongs to him. I've been giving it him for the last three years myself. But there's only one party in the Reichstag which recognizes the word of God : thou shalt not kill. And that's the Opposition. That's why we've got to join forces with the Opposition. We'll send a list with your names to the Opposition, and they can take it to the peace conference at Stockholm and tell the world that the German Fleet wants a peace which'll let Germany live and let everybody else live. It's us who are the real patriots !

CRIES. Bravo !

SANDER. I'm here to represent 300 men in *Pillau*. They'll stand by you.

CRIES. Hurrah !

BRAUNER. I'm here to represent 600 men in *Kaiserin*. They'll stand by you.

CRIES. Hurrah !

BIEBER. I'm here to represent 350 men in *Helgoland*. They'll stand by you.

CRIES. Hurrah !

LINKE. I'm here to represent 200 men in *Posen*. They'll stand by you.

CRIES. Hurrah !

KÖBIS. As well as that we have with us 408 men in *König Albert*, 380 men in *Westfalen* and all the men in *Prinzregent Luitpold*.

CRIES. Hurrah ! Hurrah !

DAMES. Comrades ! I'm not going to say much. But what I think is we ought to do something instead of talking. I think we ought to run up the proper flag and set a course for England. . . . Or else hang the blighters aft to the yard-arm and blow the tubs out of the sea !

CRIES. Bravo ! Idiot ! Bravo ! Mucker ! Bilge !

DAMES. And why ? If we go on like this there'll be no peace until we're all blown to bits. It's not hard, what I've said ; it's as easy as winking if you've a will. I'm no speaker, I tell you ; but if we haven't the guts to let up on talking and get down to work . . .

IN THE BAR

BECKERS. Do you know him, Max ?

REICHPIETSCH. He says he's a stoker in *Pillau*.

KÖBIS. Did you notice his hands ?

REICHPIETSCH. Why ?

KÖBIS. He's never worked in a stoke-hold, I'll bet my life.

REICHPIETSCH. You always were a suspicious devil !

KÖBIS. I have my reasons. I knew a week ago that there were spies and informers about. I'm going in.

LUCIE. Give us a penny for the slot ! (*Starts up the electric piano.*) Come and dance !

REICHPIETSCH. Leave it till to-morrow evening.

LUCIE. To-morrow we may all be dead. . . . Come on!
REICHPIETSCH. All right—just once round.
LUCIE (*sings to the tune*). I'm young and I'm good and I'm willing,
And I'll take a sailor's shilling.

IN THE HALL

DAMES. We've got to do what the Russians did. Blow up the fleet and clear out. Otherwise there'll be no end to all this!

KÖBIS. Mates! Did the Russian revolutionaries come to Germany with their fleet and hand it over to Kaiser Wilhelm for a birthday present? . . . Did they hell! . . . Look here, mates! We've got to get it clear that we've started talking a bit too soon. We ought to have waited until we'd got the whole fleet behind us. And that won't be long, either! It'll soon be time for us to show that we care damn all for Belgium and Poland and the Baltic Provinces! We're not being paid for this by England. We're Germans all right; just as much as the noisy ones. The Parties have let us down. They won't help us, so we must help ourselves. Think of Karl Liebknecht! Down with the ruddy war!

ALL. To hell with the ruddy war!

A SAILOR (*jumps up on to a table and sings*). We don't fight for our country
Nor do we fight for God,
We're fighting for the ruddy toffs
Who kick us in the mud!

(ALL *join in, beating time with their glasses.*)

SAILOR. Look out! Shut up! There's a squad of ruddy marines outside with fixed bayonets!

(*Uproar. Cries.*)

KÖBIS. Mates! You'll all stay where you are! Nobody is to leave! Let 'em come! We've demonstrated for our rights! We can look after ourselves all right! We don't need a nurse for that! We'll go on board of our own accord. This meeting is over. Now you can enjoy yourselves.

(KÖBIS *pulls a mouth-organ out of his pocket and begins to play; the others sing.*)

When I was living in Hamburg
I was so young and gay;
I kept my name unto myself
And thrived on sailor's pay.

My brother wrote me sadly:
Dear sister, please to come;
Your mother's lying very ill
And wants her little girl home . . .

Who wants the Kaiser's crown?
Who wants a shilling a day?
There's nothing so rare that can compare
With a girl on sailor's pay!

IN THE BAR

LUCIE. Hide, Max! Upstairs in my room! They won't look for you there!

REICHPIETSCH. Don't you worry, kid.

LUCIE. But I'm afraid for you, Max! They'll lock you up if you stay! . . . I know a fisherman who'll take you over to Holland . . .

REICHPIETSCH. Same again, please! Us fellows have to pay twice as much for our drink as the officers. Next thing that'll happen they'll be given a pound of tea for everything they drink! Extra. Reward. For gallant thirst!

LUCIE. I'd go too, Max. We could meet in Amsterdam.

REICHPIETSCH (*singing*). For I'm young and I'm good and I'm willing,
And I'll take a sailor's shilling.

LUCIE (*weeps*). You don't love me a bit, Max, I know you don't!

REICHPIETSCH (*kisses her, laughing*). You've got a bloke already. And I've got a girl in Berlin.

(*The* MASTER-AT-ARMS *comes in, with several guards.*)

MASTER-AT-ARMS. Hands up!

(REICHPIETSCH, *and two other* SAILORS *who are standing at the bar, laugh.*)

Put 'em up, you lousy deserter!

REICHPIETSCH. Nice day; isn't it? Bit too much rain, perhaps.

MASTER-AT-ARMS. Stand to attention, or I fire!

REICHPIETSCH. Here's how!

MASTER-AT-ARMS. Who's that singing? Any more of you inside?

REICHPIETSCH. Yes, a good dozen.

MASTER-AT-ARMS. I see . . . Look here, I'm not here to be nasty. I've come as one man to another.

REICHPIETSCH. Oh yes?

MASTER-AT-ARMS. You might be reasonable and tell whoever's in there that I've got to take 'em back on board.

REICHPIETSCH. What, with their hands up?

MASTER-AT-ARMS. We Prussians don't use our guns so freely as all that . . .

REICHPIETSCH. You're a comic, you are. . . . Here's how!

MASTER-AT-ARMS. All right, then? I mean well by you, honest.

REICHPIETSCH. So do I . . . wait there.

IN THE HALL

REICHPIETSCH. Ssh! Shut up! There's a Master-at-Arms with four men come to take us prisoners.

(*Laughter.*)

You watch him when he sees you! I kidded him that there were only a dozen here. I'm going out now. You get together and wait. This is going to be bloody funny, this is!

IN THE BAR

REICHPIETSCH. All clear!

MASTER-AT-ARMS. They're coming all right? That's fine.

REICHPIETSCH. Fine for you, you mean. You're after the Iron Cross, I suppose.

MASTER-AT-ARMS. It won't be so bad for you. It probably won't even mean Court Martial.

REICHPIETSCH (*flings open the doors to the hall*). Master-at-Arms to see you, mates: six hundred men ready to march!

MASTER-AT-ARMS (*recoils*). What the hell? . . . Six hundred?

REICHPIETSCH. Hip hip . . .

ALL. Hurrah!

REICHPIETSCH. Hip hip . . .

ALL. Hurrah!

REICHPIETSCH: Hip, hip . . .

ALL. Hurrah!!!

REICHPIETSCH. You run behind the bar, Henry! You're safest out of the way—and think of your ruddy Iron Cross! Company, march at ease!

ALL (*marching out in procession, swinging their caps, sing*). Who wants
the Kaiser's crown?
Who wants a shilling a day?
There's nothing so rare that can compare
With a girl on sailor's pay.

LUCIE (*next to the* MASTER-AT-ARMS, *sings, arms akimbo*). There's
nothing so rare that can compare
With a girl on sailor's pay!

Darkness.

SCENE SIX

August, 1917. *Prison Examination-room.*

SCHULER, *military lawyer, seated at the table; next to him a* CLERK.

SCHULER (*to* CLERK). Will you be good enough to take down a letter to my wife—it's to go off at once . . . ready? . . . "My dear Betty, thank you so much for your last parcel. The pants will come in very useful, and the braces, too; but the liver sausage is a little superfluous. We have enough to eat. And anyway the kiddies want all the sausage they can get. Can little Max say 'papa' yet? . . . At the moment I have a very difficult case on hand which is keeping me awake at

night; but the fact that it has been given me to handle is definitely a feather in my cap. I shall do everything in my power to see that the conduct of it shall be legally above reproach. . . ."

SENTRY (*enters*). Sachse, Beckers, Köbis and Reichpietsch, sir.

SCHULER. One moment . . . "With love and all good wishes . . . Your affectionate . . ." Thank you! Bring the men in.

(SACHSE, BECKERS, KÖBIS, *and* REICHPIETSCH *are led in.*)

Aha, after the gallows, I hear? . . . Make yourselves at home. . . . All of you except Reichpietsch can wait outside.

(KÖBIS, SACHSE, BECKERS *are led out again.*)

Will you have a cigarette? (*To the* CLERK.) . . . Light, please. (*Draws a gallows on his pad, points to his revolver.*) As you see, this is a revolver, and this is a gallows. You can take your choice between shooting or hanging. Just as you prefer. Sit down . . . Cigarette out already? This war tobacco! Here . . . (*Gives him a light.*) Yes, this is war-time all right. Have you ever thought of that?

(REICHPIETSCH *is silent.*)

Do your parents go to church?

REICHPIETSCH. They're Papists.

SCHULER. Poor parents! . . . Your fiancée's name is Grete?

REICHPIETSCH. Yes.

SCHULER. Where did you first meet her?

REICHPIETSCH. It was when the Christmas parcels came aboard. I had a pair of mittens. There was a note with them from her. I wrote to thank her, and later, on leave in Berlin, we got to know each other. She's a saleswoman at Tietz's.

SCHULER. And you love your fiancée?

REICHPIETSCH. Yes.

SCHULER. You are said to have boasted of your relations with the *demi-monde* . . .

REICHPIETSCH. I don't understand, sir.

SCHULER. But if you love your fiancée that's another matter. . . . Do you know Port Arthur?

REICHPIETSCH. Every officer and every sailor in the fleet knows it.

SCHULER. Do you admit having visited Port Arthur?

REICHPIETSCH. We're not the only ones that can't sweat through the ribs—you ask the officers!

SCHULER. That's enough for me. . . . Now will you sign yesterday's statement?

REICHPIETSCH (*reading*). That's not what I said.

SCHULER. Not your exact words perhaps; but they express the sense of what you said.

REICHPIETSCH. There's nothing there about the bad food and ill-treatment.

SCHULER. Can't you forget this celebrated bad food for a moment? . . . This isn't the place for it. Will you sign?

REICHPIETSCH. Three weeks I've been in prison now, and you're on at me morning, noon, and night—questions, questions, questions. You even wake me up in the middle of the night to ask me things. I tell you, my head's feeling fit to burst. As soon as I hear the warder unlocking the door I know I'm in for another dose of torture. How many of these statements have I signed already? I've had enough of it! That isn't what I said!

SCHULER. Are you accusing me of falsifying your words? . . . Will you sign, or not? . . . I'll see that you get fair play.

REICHPIETSCH. I want to talk to my parents about it.

SCHULER. You should have thought of that before. You know well enough that civilians are forbidden entry to this fortress.

REICHPIETSCH. What about the officer's fiancées? *They* come all right! Why can't I write to my mother even? Is there any law about that?

SCHULER. I would gladly give you permission . . . but I've no authority. I don't know what the objection is myself.

REICHPIETSCH (*suddenly sobbing*). The whole thing's a bloody twist!

SCHULER. Reichpietsch, don't make things more difficult than they already are. You are an intelligent man. Sign this and be done with it.

REICHPIETSCH. After all, I suppose it don't matter one way or another . . . (*He signs.*)

SCHULER. Thank you . . . Take him away! . . . Beckers!

(REICHPIETSCH *is led off.*)

(*To* CLERK.) Add the following to my report to the Secretary of State: "Concerning Reichpietsch's character": "If my personal impression of Reichpietsch is of any help I can perhaps best characterize him by calling him a thorough scoundrel; though it must be added that police inquiries have failed to produce actual proof in support of this impression."

(BECKERS *is brought in.*)

(*To* BECKERS.) Well, Beckers, how are we? You still deny ever proposing to use force?

BECKERS. Yes.

SCHULER. You're the worst of the lot, you know.

BECKERS. And I thought I had such an innocent face!

SCHULER (*jumping up*). You treacherous devil! Here I have actual proof in my hands that you were urging the use of force, and you calmly sit there cheeking me to my face! You'd better forget any hopes of mercy you may once have cherished! (*Sitting.*) I tell you, I'll enjoy looking on when you're hanged. And you can take it from me it won't be long before you're singing the Red Flag among the angels! . . .

Do you recognize this note? (*Reading aloud.*) "Ship putting to sea, apparently in a state of siege. If no news after three days—then for it!"

BECKERS. Oh yes, I wrote that myself.

SCHULER. You admit, then, that you've been lying?

BECKERS. Oh no, I've not been lying! And even if I did lie to save my head which you're so keen on breaking, even if I did lie just for that and nothing else, you've still no right to call me a treacherous devil!

SCHULER. You're a nice one to talk about my rights!

BECKERS. When we went on board again at Rüstersiel we did our duty as usual. We merely wanted to be recognized as men, not treated worse than animals. That's all. We lay there with steam up. . . . Just before we put to sea a mate went over with an order to the flagship, And I gave him that note for Sachse. At Rüstersiel we'd settled that the other crews should also come out for three hours in sympathy if we were punished. My friend Köbis can confirm that.

SCHULER. Your friend Köbis . . . I'll tell you what those words "If after three days no news—then for it" mean. You were referring to the big outbreak that Köbis talked of in Rüstersiel. A general strike of the Fleet! High Treason!

BECKERS. No!

SCHULER. You yourself have destroyed the last shred of my belief in you. Here it is, in black and white—"And even if I did lie to save my neck" . . . You've admitted lying. . . . Take him away!

(BECKERS *is led off.*)

Now we have the hardest nut of all to crack . . . Is Köbis' sister there?

CLERK. She's waiting.

SCHULER. Good.

(KÖBIS *is led in.*)

Sit down.

KÖBIS. I prefer to stand.

SCHULER. Cigarette?

KÖBIS. No.

SCHULER. Köbis, it will be better for you to be reasonable. We know everything, you see. We know, for instance, that the Food Commissions of the various ships were completely organized, and we know that the headquarters was in the *Friedrich der Grosse*. We have in our possession the list intended for Stockholm with the four hundred signatures. You have committed High Treason. You were the ringleader. Don't be a coward—confess to what you have done.

(KÖBIS *is silent.*)

Köbis, you must understand I am not your legal prosecutor. I am acting solely for your own good. You come from a highly respected

family—how could you bring yourself to sink so low? Don't be so obstinate. Have some confidence in me.

KÖBIS. Thank you, I'd rather not.

SCHULER. That doesn't impress me in the least.

KÖBIS. Am I trying to impress you?

SCHULER. You're deliberately throwing away all hopes of mercy.

KÖBIS. Have I asked for mercy? . . . Is that all you have to say?

SCHULER. No. There is one other thing. (*Signing to the* CLERK.) . . . Fetch me a glass of water, please.

(CLERK *goes out.* SCHULER *lays his revolver on the table before him. Some seconds' silence.*)

KÖBIS. You needn't worry. You can put that thing away—I wouldn't dirty my fingers on you.

(CLERK *returns with* ANNA KÖBIS. ANNA *rushes up to* KÖBIS *and embraces him.*)

ANNA. Alwin!

KÖBIS. Anna . . . well! Don't cry, kid! Please—not here!

ANNA. Things are going badly with you, Alwin.

KÖBIS. How did you get here? Have they arrested you?

ANNA. No . . . Alwin, think of mum and dad! Confess while you can! Go on—it's that or your life!

SCHULER. Köbis, have you no feeling for your family?

KÖBIS. So, I see . . . ! Well, let me tell you, it's no good. You can't get me by this sort of low-down trick! . . . Hell! Pull yourself together, Anna. You're a gutful kid, aren't you? . . . Pull yourself together and don't meddle in this sort of thing. It's for men only. . . . I should like to go back to my cell.

(SCHULER *gives a sign.* KÖBIS *is led away.*)

SCHULER. Well, Fräulein Köbis—at least we can both say we've done our duty.

Darkness.

SCENE SEVEN

August, 1917. *Admiral's cabin in the Flag-ship.*

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. Nonsense, nonsense! Youthful indiscretion, indeed! These men may have been brave enough at Jutland, but to-day they're traitors—neither more nor less! You are interceding for a set of rogues . . . Youthful indiscretion!—How can you suggest such a thing?

FIRST LIEUTENANT KOHLER. That was my personal opinion, sir.

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. I respect it. But it is quite wrong-headed. Thank you, Kohler.

(KOHLER *goes.*)

(*To* SCHULER.) You are counting on death sentences?

SCHULER. Inevitably, sir.

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. I myself lost two sons at Jutland . . . These people have disgraced the flag.

SCHULER. If I may be allowed to hold an opinion, sir, might I suggest that the true criminals are the men behind the outbreak?

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. You mean the Socialists? . . . Bethmann-Hollweg was too weak. It's to be hoped Michaelis will have the courage to deal with this plague in our midst. You have collected all your evidence?

SCHULER. It's quite irrefutable, sir.

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. "Peace without annexations!" . . . It's blatant High Treason!

SCHULER. Indubitably, sir.

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. The French will take Alsace-Lorraine, the Pfalz, the left bank of the Rhine. And we shall be left to whistle for the wind. . . . Even this Peace resolution they've just put through in the Reichstag seems to me nothing less than criminal. The whole of this agitation for peace, as I see it, is the direct outcome of the Government's weakness in face of the Socialists. . . . Will you have a drink?

SCHULER. Thank you very much, sir.

(*The seamen's band can be heard off.*)

ADMIRAL V. SCHEER. The Admiralty have just sent me a ruling on this business—chockful of sophistries and hairsplittings. These people are afraid to use the word insurrection. But I can do without their support. I can bear the responsibility myself. As I see it this is mutiny pure and simple. . . . They want us to wait until the mutineers have done something definite—but what the hell's the good of that? . . . I'd like to know what all these little black-coats would say if they saw the Red Flag at the mast-head of His Majesty's Battle Fleet! . . . We must root it out while we've still got the chance! Meanwhile we must get the approval of the War Office to have 'em shot at Cologne. (*To* ADJUTANT.) Have that letter to von Stein typed out, and then bring it to me for my signature. . . . Come for a turn outside, Schuler?

SCHULER. Certainly, sir.

(ADMIRAL V. SCHEER *and* SCHULER *go out.* HANKE *enters.*)

ADJUTANT (*to* HANKE). Take this down: "It is not improbable that during the next few days certain men of His Majesty's High Seas Fleet will be sentenced to death. In view of the working-class population of Wilhelmshaven one must reckon with the possibility of unrest if the sentences are carried out here; unrest which might infect the naval dockyards, especially the U-Boat sections. Therefore I have been

negotiating with the Government at Cologne with a view to having the sentences carried out there. The Government has declared its readiness to meet us in the matter, and we should be grateful for confirmation from the War Office." . . . When you've finished that call me. I shall be in the mess.

Darkness.

SCENE EIGHT

September, 1917. *Court Martial.*

CAPTAIN, LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER, FIRST LIEUTENANT, CLERKS. *On their right the Prosecution. Near them, sitting against the wall,* SENIOR OFFICERS, SHIPS' CHAPLAINS. *Then the accused :* KÖBIS, REICHPIETSCH, BECKERS, SACHSE, WEBER. *Near them the Defence—in uniform and in civilian clothes.*

PRESIDENT. You had no intention of using force to realize your aims ?

REICHPIETSCH. No.

SCHULER. This man, Reichpietsch, seems to have changed his mind rather suddenly. I should like his official statement to be read to the Court.

PRESIDENT. " Wilhelmshaven, 10th August. While on leave in Berlin I met Deputy Dittmann for the first time. He personally took me to Frau Zietz. I admit unconditionally that I was aware of the Party's views as to the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference, implicit in which was the use of force—disobedience, law-breaking, strikes, and so on. . . ." Is that your signature, Reichpietsch ?

REICHPIETSCH. Yes.

PRESIDENT. I don't understand you. It is usual for a seaman to stand by his word.

REICHPIETSCH. I was cross-examined for hours and days. They asked me this, that and the other, and I said yes, or no, or nothing at all. Then he dictated this statement. There are words in it I'd never heard or seen before in all my life. I asked him about it and he said " They may not be your exact words, but they convey the exact sense of your words "—So what could I do ? He is an officer, and I'm only an able seaman.

SCHULER. I would like the President of the Court to ask Reichpietsch whether he ever received this card ?

PRESIDENT (*reading*). " Dear friend, we are overjoyed. You can count on our full support. Go carefully. With best wishes, Luise." Do you know this card ?

REICHPIETSCH. Frau Luise Zietz sent it to me.

PRESIDENT. Oh, and what were your relations with her ? . . . It's all very intimate. " Luise ! "

(*Laughter.*)

REICHPIETSCH. I've scarcely exchanged a dozen words with her.

PRESIDENT. Luise, Luise . . . These people's morals are beyond me . . . This card is an answer to something. What was it?

REICHPIETSCH. I'd written to say that we were getting new members for the Independent Socialist Party.

SCHULER. Were you aware of the I.S.P.'s programme?

REICHPIETSCH. They wanted a reasonable peace.

SCHULER. Oh no, it's not so simple as that. The most important points in the I.S.P. programme are as follows: the whole Fleet to go over to the I.S.P.; immediate peace without annexations by means of a general laying down of arms, general strike at home, and refusal to obey the ruling authorities, civil or military.

PRESIDENT. You knew of this programme?

REICHPIETSCH. No. It's the first time I've heard a word of it.

PRESIDENT. Did you, Weber?

WEBER. No. I wanted the food controller to be . . .

SCHULER. The food control commission was merely camouflage for you while you worked out your real plans.

WEBER. On the very first day the food commission found that twenty-five pounds of butter intended for the crew had been diverted into the officers' mess.

PRESIDENT. We are not concerned here with the problematical—I repeat, problematical—transgressions of an individual quartermaster. We are concerned here exclusively with a case of High Treason. To avoid misunderstandings of any kind I must emphasize that any irregularities of the kind which inevitably occur from time to time in all large organizations will be hunted out and those responsible severely punished. Though, incidentally, I may remark that in my all long experience I have never had a case yet of a German officer being found guilty of such an offence. . . . You knew of the I.S.P. programme, Beckers?

BECKERS. No.

PRESIDENT. Did you, Köbis?

(KÖBIS *is silent.*)

It is my duty to point out to you that according to the law your silence may be taken as unconditional assent.

SCHULER. The general tendency of the programme, even if it was not put down in black and white, was actually known to all the accused.

A DEFENDING COUNSEL. Is my colleague himself acquainted with the official programme of the I.S.P.?

SCHULER. No.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. In view of the fact that the I.S.P. has been officially dissolved in Germany I find it hard to believe in this alleged programme.

SCHULER. I have deduced the programme from the signed statements of witnesses and accused. The nature of the I.S.P.'s official programme is beside the point.

PRESIDENT. Reichpietsch, you say you met Frau Zietz in the company of Dittmann. What were you doing with him?

REICHPIETSCH. I went to complain because we'd been forbidden Socialist newspapers on board.

PRESIDENT. Really! And why should a seaman complain to a Reichstag deputy? The proper quarter for a seaman to lodge complaints is with his commanding officer. . . . Well, what did Dittmann say?

REICHPIETSCH. That the prohibition was illegal. And he told us to go carefully.

SCHULER. The old, old trick.

PRESIDENT. What made you pick on Dittmann?

REICHPIETSCH. Because it said in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* that Dittmann had the Navy.

PRESIDENT. What nonsense—"Dittmann had the Navy"!? His Majesty the Kaiser "has" the Navy, and no one else.

REICHPIETSCH. That's what it said.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I should like to call Herr Dittmann to give evidence. It can be done quickly enough by telegram, and there will be no question of holding up the case for him. Herr Dittmann should be here to give evidence on the conversation between him and the accused. I should also like the witness to bring a copy of the I.S.P.'s official programme with him.

SCHULER. I hope the Court will refuse my colleague's application. His motive is quite transparent. Through Dittmann's presence here he hopes to make the atmosphere of the Court more propitious for the prisoners, regardless of the facts of the case.

(*The* JUDGES *rise to withdraw for consultation. The* PRESIDENT *beckons them. He confers briefly with them, then puts on his uniform cap.*)

PRESIDENT. Defending Counsel's application is refused on the grounds of triviality. . . . Usher, call the witness Reister.

(REISTER *enters.*)

You are Alois Reister, born in Munich, July 3rd, 1895; Catholic.

REISTER. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT. Raise your right hand and repeat the oath after me. . . . I swear . . . by Almighty God . . . that the evidence I give to this Court . . . shall be the truth . . . the whole truth and nothing but the truth . . .

REISTER. Shall be the truth and nothing but the truth.

PRESIDENT. The truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing but the truth.

REISTER. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

PRESIDENT. So help me God.

REISTER. S'help me God.

PRESIDENT. You are to tell the Court how you found the food on board. What was it like?

REISTER. The food was satisfying and plentiful. Even when we were at sea it was good. . . . It was always better than they had at the front and at home.

PRESIDENT. Have you ever heard of any irregularities in the distribution of the food?

REISTER. They just couldn't happen. The stewards weighed everything beforehand, and the mess cooks wouldn't let themselves be done out of an ounce of bread.

PRESIDENT. What have you to say to that, Sachse?

SACHSE. Reister was only a writing fellow—a clerk.

BECKERS. He'd no means of knowing at all how things were going with us.

WEBER. He just ran round giving out stores—extra shirts, extra trousers, extra shoes, and never came anywhere near us if he could help it!

PRESIDENT. Have you any further questions to put to this witness? . . . The Prosecution? . . . The Defence? . . . The witness may stand down. Usher, call Dames.

(REISTER *goes out.* DAMES *enters.*)

You are Josef Dames, born at Elbing, February 2nd, 1894, Protestant.

DAMES. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT. In view of the fact that you are suspected of conspiring with the accused you will not be sworn in. You will, nevertheless, give your evidence as you would if you were under oath.

DAMES. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT. You were at the Rüstersiel meeting? Tell the Court your impressions of it. What was decided there?

DAMES. Very good, sir. I knew at once what was in the wind the moment I saw them. You ought to have heard the way they talked! Anyone would have thought they were paid to act like that by the English.

BECKERS. You talked louder than any of us, you rotten little pimp!

DAMES. I'm not here to be insulted by you!

PRESIDENT. Control yourself, Beckers!

BECKERS. Nothing we could think of was enough for him. He wanted to go further than any of us.

DAMES. Well, what if I did? I was there to find out what you were after. I had to act as though I was in with you. . . . What were they deciding? . . . To string the officers up on the main-yard and take the fleet over to England.

BECKERS. Liar!

PRESIDENT. You will be given an opportunity to refute the witness later.

DAMES. "Liar" is about all he can say, and he knows it! As long ago as July they wanted to sink their ship in the harbour at Kiel.

PRESIDENT. Whom do you mean by "they"?

DAMES. Beckers, Reichpietsch, and the others.

PRESIDENT. Reichpietsch, you say you met Frau Zietz in the company of Dittmann. What were you doing with him?

PRESIDENT. Reichpietsch, what have you to say to that?

REICHPIETSCH. It's all stinking lies!

PRESIDENT. Beckers?

BECKERS. Köbis has already said the man's an informer.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. Are any proceedings being taken against this witness?

DAMES. Against me? I should think not!

DEFENDING COUNSEL. We are living in time of war. Freedom to hold meetings is for the time being rescinded. I am wondering whether the Rüstersiel inn-keeper had permission from the police to let his room for the sailors' meeting. In other words, was the meeting known to the police and approved by them? Perhaps the witness can enlighten the Court on this point.

SCHULER. I move that this question be not allowed.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. If the Court will not allow my question I shall ask permission to call the inn-keeper, Kahler, as witness. Kahler will tell the Court under oath that the police were informed of the meeting, and, further, that he received police permission to let his hall for the purpose. I ask again: is the witness aware of this?

SCHULER. I protest against this question.

PRESIDENT (*confers with the* JUDGES). The question is not allowed.

DEFENDING COUNSEL. I should like the decision of the Court over my proposal to call the inn-keeper, Kahler.

PRESIDENT (*after a hasty conference with the* JUDGES). The Court refuses permission to call the inn-keeper, Kahler. . . . Any further questions? . . . The Prosecution? . . . The Defence? . . .

BECKERS. I should like to put a question to the Court: do you believe Dames when he says we wanted to blow up the ship?

PRESIDENT (*glances at the* JUDGES, *who nod back at him*). The Court take it that the accused did not seriously conspire to blow up the ship.

REICHPIETSCH (*softly to* KÖBIS). Good for them!

SCHULER. Further action against the witness Dames will be reserved.

DAMES. Action against me? . . . But Lieutenant Meier promised me leave . . .

PRESIDENT. The witness may stand down . . . Clerk, take this down: The witness Dames to be released by general agreement.

(DAMES *goes out.*)

SCHULER. I have just been handed a statement by the man Calmus, now under arrest, which throws vivid light on the situation as a whole. Have I the Court's permission to read it out?

(PRESIDENT *nods.*)

SCHULER. "On August 1st I went to Berlin on leave. I wanted to visit the headquarters of the I.S.P. At the door I met a man who said he was a Reichstag Deputy, name of Dittmann. Then another Deputy, Ledebour, came up. We went to a fine house by tram and

cab and saw a number of officers and civilians "—I take these to have been French and English officers in German uniform—" I was given some food and one of the officers, a major, said I was to strike boldly. After the meal Ledebour said that the men of the Fleet must mutiny. I had to lay my hand on the hilt of a dagger and swear to work with them. Dittmann promised me 5,000 marks in gold or bank-notes if I sent in so many seamen's signatures by the end of August. While he was speaking an officer jingled money in a leather purse. Then Dittmann said he had still another job for me: I was to make an attempt on the Kaiser's life with a time bomb. At that I jumped up, drew my revolver and told all present to put their hands on the backs of the chairs and tear up the plan of the assassination. They were scared to death and obeyed me. Then I said I would undertake the organization on board; they'd got my word for it. But if I heard anything more of this plan for assassinating the Kaiser I would report it at once. After saying that I rushed out." . . . There you have Calmus's confession. The Admiralty have just been notified of it by telegraph, and the necessary steps have been taken.

(*Excitement in Court.*)

SECOND DEFENDING COUNSEL. In view of this confession I must again ask for leave to call Herr Dittmann.

PRESIDENT (*after hasty conference*). The Court refuses permission to call Herr Dittmann. . . . Before the taking of evidence is ended, have you anything further to say for yourself, Reichpietsch?

REICHPIETSCH. If I could only say what I really think . . .

PRESIDENT. Speak only if you have something relevant to say.

REICHPIETSCH. I must begin at the beginning. . . . My parents are concièrges. . . . When I was eight I began to earn a little to help them out. . . . I was a ball boy at the tennis courts, and I got twenty pfennigs an hour. I gave my mother everything I earned. . . . I wanted to make something of myself, so I joined the cadets and sang "*Deutschland über alles*" with the rest. In 1912 I joined the Navy. Then the war came. . . . I did my job properly at Jutland. . . . But after that the old trouble began again. . . . The officers ought to live like we do once in a way . . . the filthy food, the bad treatment. . . . I don't believe in war any more. I believe in the Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" . . .

SCHULER. I should like the President to ask the accused about his previous offences. It will be found that he believed with less conviction in the Commandment "Thou shalt not steal."

PRESIDENT (*turning over documents*). You received disciplinary punishment in all fourteen times?

REICHPIETSCH. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT. Once for stealing?

REICHPIETSCH. I did not steal.

PRESIDENT. The money was found among your things.

REICHPIETSCH. It was really the money from a little cigarette trade

I did with another fellow on board. It was against the rules, and I did not want to let on about my pal, so I didn't say anything.

SCHULER. So we pose as a hero and a martyr now!

PRESIDENT. Any further questions? . . . The Defence?

THIRD COUNSEL FOR DEFENCE. I have a receipt here which shows that Weber subscribed to *Vorwärts* and not to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*.

PRESIDENT. Weber?

WEBER. I got fed up with the tone of the *Volkszeitung*—always criticizing, always carping.

THIRD DEFENDING COUNSEL. I have the impression that Weber was a supporter of Scheidemann rather than Dittmann.

PRESIDENT. How is that, Weber?

WEBER. I was only interested in the Food Control. I didn't want to have anything to do with politics, and that's a fact.

KÖBIS (*to* BECKERS, *softly*). Bloody hypocrite!

BECKERS (*softly*). Let him lie if he wants to.

KÖBIS (*softly*). This gang isn't fit to lie to.

PRESIDENT. What is it, Köbis?

BECKERS (*softly*). Keep your mouth shut!

KÖBIS. I should like the Court to ask Weber what proposals he made to us at the Tivoli meeting.

PRESIDENT. Well, Weber? . . .

(WEBER *is silent.*)

If your friend, Weber, hasn't the courage to speak himself perhaps you will tell us, Köbis.

KÖBIS. It's simply that Weber swore at us because we refused to make our friends take the *Volkszeitung*—the really Socialist paper—instead of *Vorwärts*. I wouldn't force anybody to do anything, but he wanted to all right.

(*Excitement.*)

SCHULER (*jumping up*). He confesses!

KÖBIS. Now it's my turn to speak! I've held my tongue while these witnesses have been talking, while they all told you that I was the ringleader. I held my tongue when they accused me of threatening to blow up the *Prinzregent*. I held my tongue because I wanted to. I had no intention of defending myself in front of you. I despise you! The lot of you! It's you who are the enemies of Germany, not the stokers in the English ships. They're my pals. I sweated alongside of them before the war, and I shall again after the war. It's you who are our real enemies!

PRESIDENT. Silence! Silence!

KÖBIS. We were much too stupid and too cowardly to do what you've said we wanted to do! I wish we had now. We hoped for great things from the Reichstag, the Deputies, the newspapers, the I.S.P. But nobody helps you unless you help yourself first. We've

got to put our own house in order before we can clear up the mess the big pots have made. What right have you to speak for Germany? *You're* not Germany—it's *we* who are Germany!

PRESIDENT. Silence, or I'll have you removed.

KÖBIS. Germany will listen to *us*—not to *you*!

PRESIDENT. Any further questions, please? . . . The evidence is concluded . . . Counsel for the Prosecution!

SCHULER. Gentlemen! I am all too vividly aware of the heavy responsibilities of my position. Do you think that we should be sitting here now, at this moment, if these men had succeeded in carrying out their dastardly plot? . . . There is only one fitting end for traitors who have stabbed their Fatherland in the back, for men who have sought to wreck the Fleet in time of war—and that is death. . . . During many, many sleepless nights I have . . .

Darkness.

SCENE NINE

Cells. Before them a barred corridor. REICHPIETSCH'S *cell is revealed.*

REICHPIETSCH (*sitting at the table, reads*). "Dear Mother and Father, I should have written long before this to tell you what was happening to me, but I wanted to wait until I knew what my sentence would be. Now I do know, and it is even worse than I expected. I have been condemned to death. Little did I think when we said good-bye in June that it would be for the last time. So forgive me, my dears, for not writing before. It is the last thing you will have to forgive. Then I can pass quietly and peacefully into the other world where we shall all see one another again one day. I thank you now for all your past kindness to me. . . . You must excuse me if I don't write any more now, but my heart is so heavy. . . . Give Will and Gertrude my love, and my love and last kisses for you too.

Your loving son, Max."

(REICHPIETSCH *sobs, sinking down with his head on the table; then pulls himself together and writes:*)

"The only thing you can do for me is to send a petition to the Kaiser through a lawyer or the parish priest."

(KÖBIS'S *cell is revealed:* KÖBIS *is walking to and fro, to and fro. The cell is unlocked and the* PRIEST *enters.*)

PRIEST. Let me entreat you, my son, before it is too late: make an end of your foolish obstinacy. Repent. Acknowledge to yourself that you have sinned. Pray for grace; perhaps the Almighty will help you in your last hour.

KÖBIS. You're wasting your breath. I will not pray for grace.

PRIEST. You poor, stubborn creature!

KÖBIS. Do you really think it's a joke dying like this? Do you think I want to die? Because I don't, I assure you.

PRIEST. Well, then . . .

KÖBIS. Well, what? The whole nation wants peace. I demonstrated for it, and I've got to die for it. There'll soon be plenty more.

PRIEST. You were always a good son to your parents. . . . Have you quite forgotten them now in their misfortune?

KÖBIS. You can leave that out . . . It's not my fault that I've not been able to say good-bye to them . . .

PRIEST. Köbis—believe me, it's for your own good . . .

KÖBIS. I know all about that. The Judge said the same thing, and so did my cross-examiner. And now comes the priest. And doubtless at the scaffold the hangman will say it too: it's for your own good, Köbis . . . What a lot of bloody hypocrites you are!

PRIEST. Köbis, you are past redemption . . .

(BECKERS' *cell is revealed.*)

BECKERS (*climbing up to his window*). Willy! . . .

(WEBER'S *cell is revealed.*)

WEBER (*at the barred window*). What's up?

BECKERS. Have you heard anything?

WEBER. No . . . have you?

BECKERS. No. Ask Sachse if he has.

WEBER (*knocking on the wall*). Hallo, fatty! . . .

(SACHSE'S *cell is revealed.*)

SACHSE (*at his barred window*). What's up?

WEBER. Have you heard anything?

SACHSE. No . . . have you?

WEBER. No.

SACHSE. I'm going to ring for the warder.

(SACHSE *presses a button. A* WARDER *appears, and unlocks* SACHSE'S *cell.*)

WARDER. What do you want?

SACHSE. Have you heard anything?

WARDER. We don't hear any more than you do.

SACHSE. Nothing at all?

WARDER. The priest's been at Köbis again.

SACHSE. I see . . .

WARDER. There weren't enough of you—that was the trouble.

SACHSE. How do you mean?

WARDER. People are too damned stupid. You're in the right, they all say so. I was a bootmaker in Cologne, and I'd scraped together a little bit for my old age—it's all gone. . . . What do you think about it? How long's this damned swindle going on? You're a political sort of bloke.

SACHSE. It'll go on as long as you keep your mouth shut.

WARDER. Charity begins at home.

SACHSE. That's what they all say. . . . Let us be together for a bit, won't you?

WARDER. That's as much as my job's worth. You've got to realize that. It's no joke I can tell you. They'd send me to the front if they found out.

SACHSE. Just for an hour . . .

WARDER. Oh, all right.

(WARDER *unlocks the other cells and lets* KÖBIS, REICHPIETSCH, BECKERS *and* WEBER *into* SACHSE'S *cell.*)

BECKERS. Has nobody heard anything?

(*The others are silent.*)

Bloody torturers—anyone would think they were a lot of Chinks. . . . I'm dreaming about it every night. . . . I dream I'm being shot. And I think, now they'll bury me alive. I try to call out. . . . But they can't hear me. I yell and yell, and they don't hear me. The drumming is too loud, rumpumpum, rumpumpum . . . I can't move an inch; I can't stir a finger. They get hold of me and chuck me into the grave. . . . And then I scream and wake up. . . .

REICHPIETSCH. It's a bloody shame . . . a fellow's not afraid of being killed, but this sort of thing . . .

SACHSE. I can't bear it! I can't bear it any longer! All this suspense—waiting, waiting . . .

WEBER. At this rate we'll all lose what reason we've got . . . (*He weeps.*)

(*Silence.*)

KÖBIS. I'm not afraid of dying; not a bit. It's only that bloody clicking of the rifle-bolts that doesn't bear thinking about. That bloody click-clack, click-clack . . .

(*Silence.*)

BECKERS. Listen, mates, I've got a plan. We won't let them murder us. We'll do it ourselves. I've got a bit of broken glass sewed up in the lining of my coat. They missed it when they searched us. As soon as we hear what we're in for we'll pass this here glass round and there you are. Just a little cut in your wrist and you're all right! It doesn't hurt. You hardly notice it. You just get tireder and tireder and your ruddy life runs away as you bleed . . .

SACHSE. We'll do it.

WEBER. Let's have a look at the bit of glass.

(BECKERS *produces it.*)

REICHPIETSCH. Why wait any longer? . . . Why not do it now and have done with it!

BECKERS. What do you think, Alwin?

KÖBIS (*laughs*). It would be a damned good joke to spoil the hangman's pleasure! . . .

SACHSE. Schuler would never get over it.

BECKERS. And our nice little warder would lose his cushy job.

(*They all laugh.*)

KÖBIS. It's no good, mates! It'll be bloody hell if they do stick us up against the wall. . . . But we shan't be dying for nothing.

REICHPIETSCH. That's all right—if they'd guts enough to take us out into the open and do it publicly. But they haven't. They'll do us in secretly, and bury us secretly, and nobody will be any the wiser. Just a private little murder between them and us. Assassination they call it.

KÖBIS. Assassination's the word! But still . . .

SACHSE. Anyway, what have we done? What right have they to do that to us? . . .

WEBER. Didn't the Kaiser himself say "I recognize no more parties"? . . . The Socialists aren't a party, I suppose!

KÖBIS. Where does "right" come into it? . . . They've got might, and that's all they need!

(*Distant singing is heard.*)

BECKERS. Ssh!

REICHPIETSCH. The Internationale!

KÖBIS. So it is!

REICHPIETSCH. They're coming for us!

SACHSE. They're coming to get us out!

ALL (*sing softly*). *Völker, hort die Signale!*
Auf zum letzten Gefecht!
Die Internationale
Erkampft das Menschenrecht!

(*They stop, listen. The song ceases outside.*)

KÖBIS. Just a crowd of drunks. They only remember the Internationale when they're soused!

(*Silence.*)

SACHSE. Do you remember old Roddei at Jutland? How he went on yelling about women right up until he pegged out?

WEBER. Old Roddei . . . sure I do . . . He's been food for fishes a long time now.

SACHSE. I bet she soon got over it, his Minna.

BECKERS. Her sort don't have to wait long these days.

WEBER. She was hot stuff by all accounts.

REICHPIETSCH. And we're here . . . What's the good of talking!

KÖBIS. They ought to give us one day off—just an hour at Port Arthur.

SACHSE. They always give you a last request. I'll say I want one more time with Marie, the fat one.

REICHPIETSCH. Marie! Don't talk about her . . . When I was there last she said "I've been waiting for you, chum. Now we'll have a bit of fun together." We did too.

SACHSE. She wasn't like that with me.

WEBER. She generally kept that for the officers.

KÖBIS. I liked the little one best, Alma.

REICHPIETSCH. No, there was none to touch old Marie . . . She had—what d'you call it? . . . Feeling.

WEBER. Feeling! That's it . . .

KÖBIS. How could the poor devil have 'feeling' leading a life like that?

SACHSE. I can hear her now when she was a bit lit up with that creepy voice of hers:

For I'm young and I'm good and I'm willing,
And I'll take a sailor's shilling.

BECKERS. You take her off, Max. You're best at it.

REICHPIETSCH (*the others surrounding him*). For I'm young and I'm good and I'm willing,
And I'll take a sailor's shilling.

SACHSE. Go on, dance like her.

REICHPIETSCH. Nothing doing!

BECKERS. What does it matter?

(REICHPIETSCH *dances.*)

ALL (*clap their hands in time and sing*). For I'm young and I'm good and I'm willing,
And I'll take a sailor's shilling.

(*The* WARDER *suddenly unlocks the cell.*)

WARDER. Not so loud, you bloody fools! . . . Back to your cells and look slippy! You're having visitors!

(*The* WARDER *leads the way to the other cells, leaving* SACHSE *alone once more. An* OFFICER *accompanied by an* N.C.O. *and four* MEN *enter.*)

OFFICER. The condemned men!

WARDER. Very good, sir.

(*He fetches the* PRISONERS.)

OFFICER. I have to acquaint you with the following:

"3rd September, 1917.

1. Sentence of death on the men Sachse, Weber and Beckers will be commuted to penal servitude for fifteen years.

2. Sentence of death on the men Reichpietsch and Köbis is hereby confirmed.

(Signed) von Scheer,
Admiral Commanding the High Seas Fleet."

Sachse, Weber, and Beckers will return to their cells. Köbis and Reichpietsch will be transferred preparatory to the carrying out of their sentences.

(Köbis *and* Reichpietsch *stare dumbly at each other ; allow themselves to be fettered and led away without a word.*)

Darkness.

SCENE TEN

While the stage darkens there is a dull rolling of drums which suddenly ceases, giving way to the tramp of marching feet.

Commands. Halt !
Attention !
Ready !
Load !
Take aim !

The Voice of Köbis. I die with a curse upon the German military State !

Command. Fire !

(*Loud drum-roll. Bugle-call.*)

(*Silence.*)

SCENE ELEVEN

End of September, 1917. *Concièrge's living-room in a Berlin apartment house. Outside a barrel organ is playing and somebody is beating a carpet.*

Frau Reichpietsch. Doesn't she know to-day is Wednesday ? It's the new one from the Government Office.

Herr Reichpietsch (*calling out of the window*). Hi, there ! No carpet beating allowed to-day ! . . . What's that ? . . . An exception ? . . . What do you think the others would say if I let you go on like that ?

Frau Reichpietsch. She's from the country.

(*There is a ring at the bell.*)

Herr Reichpietsch (*at the hatch leading to the hall*). Who is it you want ? . . . Dr. Miericke ? . . . Third floor, on the left . . . No, the lift's not working. (*Closing the hatch.*) The doctor's been complaining about that lift

Frau Reichpietsch. Have you told the landlord ?

Herr Reichpietsch. Surely I have. " He can clear out to Palestine where he belongs," he said. " We've got more to worry about than lifts in war-time."

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. I can hear him saying it! What does he know about war?

(*A ring at the bell.*)

HERR REICHPIETSCH (*at the hatch*). Who is it you want? Herr Reichpietsch? . . . That's me. Come in.

(*A* SAILOR *comes in.*)

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Ah, you've come from Max, I know!

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Sit down, won't you?

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Just wait a minute, and I'll make you a cup of coffee—malt coffee . . . something better than your old turnip soup!

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Well, how are things with Max? We don't hear anything at all from him these days, the young devil!

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. You leave him alone, father! It's not so easy to write as to say you will, and Max was always a bit slow with his letters.

SAILOR (*softly*). Then you don't know . . . (*Breaks off.*)

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Our Will's in France—we heard from him only yesterday. He's been put in the punishment squad, and he doesn't know why . . . just outside Arras.

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Will's Max's brother.

SAILOR. Max never told me about him.

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Twelve of them I had. Twelve children . . . and nine of them dead.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. What are you thinking of?! Twelve! That's going a bit too far I'm thinking!

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. I ought to know . . . Did you have them or did I?

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Oh well, let's leave it at that.

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. What do you think of that! Ashamed of bringing twelve children into the world, he is! You ought to have been ashamed of that before, father! Before! It's too late now! (*Laughs.*)

HERR REICHPIETSCH. I'll just shut that window. That music seems to be going on for ever!

SAILOR. Excuse me, Frau Reichpietsch . . . I think I'd better go . . .

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Go? Why, you haven't told us anything of Max, yet . . .

SAILOR. I think I'd better . . .

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Why, what is it? Is Max ill?

SAILOR. You really haven't heard then?

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Heard? What ought we to have heard?

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Go on, tell us! You're making me anxious!

SAILOR. Max has been shot.

FRAU REICHPIETSCH (*crying out*). Jesus!

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Say that again!

SAILOR. Max has been shot!

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Has there been another battle at sea? . . . The papers haven't said anything about one.

SAILOR. Sooner or later you're bound to know. Your son and Köbis from Neukolln were court-martialled and shot . . .

(FRAU REICHPIETSCH *sobs.*)

HERR REICHPIETSCH. When was Max shot?

SAILOR. On the fifth of September.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. And to-day is the nineteenth.

SAILOR. Yes—but didn't you get his letter? We all thought you'd petition for his pardon.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. His pardon?

SAILOR. Max wrote begging you to try . . . He told the guard about it.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. We've had nothing from him . . . nothing . . .

SAILOR. Then the authorities stopped the letter.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. We've had nothing . . . nothing . . .

SAILOR. It doesn't seem possible!

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Nothing . . . nothing . . .

SAILOR. He was a fine fellow. We all knew that.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. When he was here on leave last year he wanted to join the infantry and leave the Navy. My wife said, "Don't lead the Lord God into temptation."

SAILOR. None of us will ever forget him.

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Look here—he made this little box, carved it himself, when he was working with Guldenstein in the Brandenburger Strasse . . . that was the sort of job he liked best . . . nice little job, isn't it?

SAILOR. Good-bye, Frau Reichpietsch. Good-bye, Herr Reichpietsch. (*Goes.*)

HERR REICHPIETSCH (*goes to his wife, who is sitting at the table still staring into space*). My dear, my dear . . .

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Do you believe it, father?

HERR REICHPIETSCH. Poor mother . . . poor mother . . .

FRAU REICHPIETSCH. Do you believe he is dead?

(HERR REICHPIETSCH *is silent.*)

It's not true . . . It can't be true . . . They couldn't do that . . . They couldn't do it . . . They couldn't shoot my boy! . . .

Darkness.

SCENE TWELVE

1918

2nd November. Kiel Roadstead.

Scene as in Scene Two

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Number one stoke-hole clear!
MATE. Number one stoke-hole clear!

(*Relief enters.*)

IN NUMBER ONE STOKE-HOLE

FIRST RELIEF STOKER. Bloody fine fire you've got there!
SECOND STOKER. You just blow! You'll soon wake it up with a mouth like that!
THIRD STOKER (*relief*). Are we all right for coal?
FIRST STOKER. Which have we got to clean out?
SECOND STOKER. One and four.

(PETTY-OFFICER *enters.*)

MATE. Second watch relieved. Steam-pressure fourteen atmospheres. Ejectors working. Number one stoke-hole clear!
CRIES. Cheerio, Hans!—Cheerio, Willy!—Shall I give Lottie your love?—Come on, mates!

(*They go.*)

SECOND STOKER. You there, hot up that coffee!
THIRD STOKER. Bread!

(*They set to work.*)

FIRST STOKER. It's a bleeding shame if you ask me!
THIRD STOKER. Why do we want to go ashore? We can see the land from here . . .
SPEAKING-TUBES. Stoke-hole number one . . . two . . . three . . . All fires clear!
SECOND STOKER. Did you hear that, Hans?
SPEAKING-TUBES. Steam up in two hours!
CRIES. What the bloody hell! What's their bleeding game?

(MESSENGER *enters.*)

SECOND STOKER. Here you, what the hell are they playing at up there?
MESSENGER. There's a rumour that we're putting out to sea.

(STOKERS *come in from Number Two stoke-hole.*)

VOICES. They say the bleeding English are cruising off Heligoland!—Tell that to the Marines!—What about our bloody mines? They can't get past them!

(ENGINEER *enters.*)

ENGINEER. Come on, men! Come on! . . . Your fire's got a great holiday in it . . . What about your water?! . . . Petty-Officer—pump those ashes out! . . .

PETTY-OFFICER. Very good, sir.

ENGINEER. Well, lads—they're for it this time, the English! Two hours and we'll be at 'em. This'll be the German Trafalgar . . .

(ENGINEER *goes.*)

(*Telephone bells. Engine-room telegraph bells.*)

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Centre engine cleared! Number two stoke-hole cleared. Number three stoke-hole cleared! . . .

(*Lamps flash.*)

PETTY-OFFICER. Come on there! Put your backs into it! . . (*To bunker-men.*) Water?

BUNKER-MAN. Nil per cent!

PETTY-OFFICER. Man the pumps!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Slow ahead port engine!

(*A* SAILOR *enters.*)

PETTY-OFFICER. What the bloody hell do you want?

SAILOR. You keep your bleeding mouth shut! . . . Listen, mates! They say we've got to put to sea. Death or victory—the bloody fools! What chance have we got to win? This isn't August, 1914, it's November, 1918! Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey have all shut up shop. The brass-hats on shore are asking for an armistice. They know bloody well that the Army's finished. And the submarines are finished too. And so are we! Are we going to let ourselves be mucked about to save the officers' faces? . . . I ask you!

ALL. No bloody fear!

SAILOR. What's it to be then? Steam up or draw the fires?

A VOICE. Draw the bloody fires!

ALL. Draw the fires!

STOKERS (*at speaking-tubes and telephone*). Draw fires!—Draw fires! (*Others rake the fires out.*)

CRIES. Here comes the old man!

SAILOR. The crew has taken command, sir.

CAPTAIN. You mean they've mutinied?

SAILOR. Against the Monarchy, sir. Not against Germany!

CAPTAIN. You are traitors to Germany!

SAILOR. We are saving Germany!

CROWD (*pressing round the* CAPTAIN). Tear off his epaulettes!

SAILOR. That's it, sir; off they come!

CAPTAIN. And if I refuse?

SAILOR. We shall use force.

CAPTAIN. I have worn these epaulettes with honour all my life.

SAILOR. Those epaulettes gave you the authority to keep us on the run, drill us, sweat us to death whenever it took your fancy. They gave you the right to gorge yourself while we shovelled down pigwash. Those epaulettes were the murderers of our comrades Reichpietsch and Köbis!

CAPTAIN. Whatever I have done I have done in the service of my Emperor. I am a German officer. I have had my duty to do . . . and I shall continue to perform it until the end.

SAILOR. Oh, and what does that mean?

CAPTAIN (*jumps to one side, draws his revolver*). The first man that dares approach I shall shoot down.

(*A* SAILOR *flings himself on the* CAPTAIN, *who fires. The crowd overwhelms him and he is borne to the ground.*)

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. Wireless message from Berlin: Revolution has broken out in the German army. The Emperor has fled to Holland.

CROWD. Hurrah!

SAILOR. So that's what he died for!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. *Prinzregent Luitpold* has hoisted the Red flag.

CROWD. Hurrah!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. *Westfalen* has hoisted the Red flag.

CROWD. Hurrah!

TELEPHONIST AND SPEAKING-TUBES. All the officers of the Fleet have surrendered without resistance and are obeying the Sailors' Councils.

SAILOR. Take off your hats to this one, then, the only officer in the German navy to die for his Emperor.

STOKER. I don't like it. I don't like it at all.

SAILOR. What's bitten you?

STOKER. I don't like the way they've given in, without any scrapping. You don't get something for nothing; it isn't right. The Revolution will have to pay for it sooner or later. You see.

SAILOR. The chief thing is we've got the power, not how we got it.

STOKER. It fell into our hands like a rotten apple. I tell you I don't like it at all.

SAILOR. You've got the pip, that's what's the matter with you.

STOKER. We shall see soon enough.

(*While the stage is darkened they cry ceaselessly:* "Draw the fires! Draw the fires!" *The cry gradually dies away.*)

(*On the cyclorama. The masts of many battleships. Through the dockyard gates the* SAILORS *march with the ship's band at their head. The cry,* "Draw the fires," *is drowned in the music of the band.*)

CURTAIN

MARY BAKER EDDY

A Play in Five Acts, translated by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

This play was produced at the Gate Theatre, London, in 1934 under the title of "Miracle in America."

CHARACTERS

MARY BAKER EDDY
MABEL SMITH
ASA GILBERT EDDY
RICHARD KENNEDY
DANIEL H. SPOFFORD
DR. E. J. FOSTER
SARA BAGLEY
MIRANDA RICE
ASA T. N. MACDONALD
BARRY
TUTLER
BANCROFT
QUIMBY (a mesmerist)
JOHN OXFORD (sheriff)
SCHUMACHER
GEORGE GLOVER (Mary's son by her first marriage)
ANNA (his wife)
DR. RUFUS NOYES
PAMELA SARGENT (Mary's secretary)
BROWN (a reporter)
WILLIAM MONEY (a banker)
HIS WIFE
MRS. BLACK
MISS WHITE
PORTER

Five SECRETARIES, *three* JOURNALISTS, *three* WORKMEN, *five* NEWSBOYS, *two* POLICEMEN, *two* WOMEN, CHURCHGOERS, READERS, PATIENTS, WAITERS, CHILDREN.

TIME: *Between* 1865 *and* 1910.
SCENE: *America.*

MARY BAKER EDDY

ACT ONE

1865

Portland, U.S.A. A hotel-room. Sliding door at the back of the stage now closed. This door leads to a second room, QUIMBY'S *consulting-room. In the waiting-room a few benches and chairs. In the consulting-room, later visible, a great chaise-longue, and opposite that a stool for the* PATIENTS.

On the benches and chairs in the waiting-room PATIENTS *are seated.*

SCHUMACHER *comes in, looks round, and sits down. The consulting-room door opens.*

QUIMBY'S VOICE. Next, please.

(*A* PATIENT *goes in, and the door closes behind him.*)

SCHUMACHER. The next . . .

MRS. BLACK. Next what?

SCHUMACHER. For the cemetery.

MISS WHITE. Do you really believe that?

SCHUMACHER. I know.

MRS. BLACK. Oh—how do you know?

MISS WHITE. Some people can smell death.

SCHUMACHER. I've had experience. When I came in just now and saw you all sitting there I said to myself—Aha, a doctor's waiting-room! I looked you all over—that fellow who's just gone in, too—and I saw that fifty per cent. of you were doomed.

MRS. BLACK. And you?

SCHUMACHER. I'm not sick—it's only my right eye that's troubling me. Cataract, the doctors say. Cataract, what do they mean by that? Could they save my left eye? They could not! For seven years I've had to wear these glasses for my right eye. For seven years I've been going the round of all the doctors in the country. I've got money, if you see what I mean. I've met thousands of patients who are dead and gone now. . . . It seems to me that the majority of patients die. And now I've come to see Quimby. They tell me Quimby has his own method, but I'm sick to death of methods. I want to be cured—that's all.

MISS WHITE. I've had an ulcer these last three years. I can't tell

you where. It's enough to say I've got an ulcer. Though I come of a good family, as they say.

SCHUMACHER. Ulcers, eh! I've known plenty like you. Plenty.

MISS WHITE. And? Well—what became of them?

SCHUMACHER. They died. Almost all of them—if not quite all.

MISS WHITE. Oh God! But my whole family has been cured. My uncle Edward had cancer. My aunt Mabel was moonstruck. Father was an alcoholic, and he passed it down to my brother John. They'd all been given up as hopeless. And now they're all cured. What do you say to that? . . . There's only one thing to say: Dr. Quimby!

SCHUMACHER. Sooner or later most of the cases that seem cured die.

MRS. BLACK. Quimby! (*Turning to her husband.*) Didn't I tell you that Quimby would heal you? My husband has been bedridden for two years now, but Quimby will make him well again. My son Alfred (*indicating him*) has trouble with his nerves. My daughter Dorothy—well, never mind . . . it's nothing to be ashamed of, child, we're all human . . . Quimby will put it right. I myself suffer from *migraine*—it runs in the family. But Quimby will cure us all. What do you think, sir?

SCHUMACHER. Your husband (*shrugs his shoulders*) . . . Your daughter (*despairing gesture*) . . . You yourself (*he sighs*) . . . Poor people!

MRS. BLACK. What are you saying? What are you saying?

SCHUMACHER. Most sick people die.

MRS. BLACK. Die? And what about you? Or do you think you'll recover just because you've plenty of money to throw about?

SCHUMACHER. I shall pull through all right. I must be healthy and I will be healthy.

(*The door opens.*)

QUIMBY'S VOICE. Next please.

(*All the patients point to* SCHUMACHER *and sign to him to go in.*)

SCHUMACHER. It's not my turn yet.
MISS WHITE. You can go first, though.
MRS. BLACK. Go on, go on.
VOICES. Go on! You go!
SCHUMACHER. It's not my turn, I tell you.
QUIMBY'S VOICE (*louder*). Next, please!

(*A* PATIENT *goes in. Some moments' silence.*)

MISS WHITE. It wasn't his turn either.
MRS. BLACK. Whose turn was it then?
MISS WHITE. Actually it was mine.
MRS. BLACK. Oh, it was yours, was it?

(*There is a sudden noise outside. The entrance door is thrown open.* MARY BAKER, *carried by a* PORTER, *two* WAITERS, *a* FOOTMAN, *a* HOUSE-MAID *and a* PAGE, *bursts in.*)

MARY BAKER. Quimby! Quimby!

(*They make to set her down.*)

No! Not here! Straight in. Straight in to Quimby! I must see Quimby!

MISS WHITE. He is engaged.

MARY. I can't wait. Not a moment! I must be taken in at once!

SCHUMACHER. You must wait your turn.

MRS. BLACK. We were all here before you.

MARY. You must let me in first. I've spent my last dollar coming here. I've tried everywhere, everywhere, and not a soul has helped me. For twenty years I've been living with my sister. And now she's thrown me out. I can't walk. I can't lie down. I can't stand. I have cramp all day and visions all night. I have no more money. I cannot wait!

SCHUMACHER. We must all wait.

MARY. I must be taken to him at once. I can't bear it any longer. My first husband is dead; I must see Quimby at once. Have you no pity? Not even now, in war-time? My second husband is a prisoner in the South. I am Dr. Patterson's wife. I am the unhappiest wretch in the world!

MRS. BLACK. There are whole families who are unhappy.

MARY. Have you no heart? For twenty years I've lain without sleep, day and night without sleep. I'm tortured as an animal is tortured. I must see Quimby at once!

SCHUMACHER. You can't see him until your turn comes.

MARY. My turn! I feel that it's already my turn to die. Quimby wrote to me saying that he would save me. He is my Saviour, he is my Redeemer. Who dares hold me back from him? Who dares close the way to him? Quimby! Quimby!

QUIMBY (*pushing the door aside and standing on the threshold*). I must have quiet, please!

MARY. Dr. Quimby!

QUIMBY. Sit down and rest, dear friend—I shall soon be ready for you. Will someone please help her?

(*He begins to close the door.*)

MARY. You mustn't leave me! It's you I want! You! You are Quimby. I should know you among thousands. You will help me.

QUIMBY. Yes, yes, I will help you. But you must wait patiently a little longer.

MARY. Wait, when HE stands before me? Wait, when my Saviour is at hand?

QUIMBY. Who is this woman?

PORTER. We found her at the street door. She couldn't move, so we brought her up here. Nobody knows who she is.

MARY. He knows me. You wrote to me. You promised me healing. . . . I've come to the end of everything. I can't wait any longer.

QUIMBY. What is your name?

MARY. I am Mary Baker, wife of Dr. Patterson of Concord. I don't believe any more in body doctors. They're all bunglers. All. But Dr. Quimby is a healer. I place all my faith in Dr. Quimby. I feel it in my innermost self: Dr. Quimby is a healer.

QUIMBY. Take her in.

(MARY *is lifted up and placed on the patients' stool. The door to the consulting-room is left open.* QUIMBY *takes* MARY'S *hands and presses her knees between his. The* PATIENTS *in the waiting-room stand watching, full of curiosity.*)

Give me your hands.

MARY. I can't. They are paralysed.

QUIMBY (*taking her hands*). Look me in the eyes.

MARY. Yes.

QUIMBY. How do you feel now? I will tell you. You are in great pain.

MARY. Yes.

QUIMBY. The pain is in your limbs.

MARY. Yes.

QUIMBY. You cannot sleep. You suffer from cramp. You have suffered from cramp for many years.

MARY. Yes, yes.

QUIMBY. They have told you you're paralysed. They have told you your whole body is poisoned and that you are incurable. You have believed these false doctors, false doctors who know nothing of men and women. What is the good of the surgeon's knife if it only cuts into the body? Sickness is not a thing of the body. It is the sickness of the mind affecting the body. And only he who purifies the mind can heal the body. The mind can make sick people well. The mind is a healer.

MARY. The mind is a healer . . .

QUIMBY. You are sitting opposite me. You look at me. You see only me. Only me! Forget the world. Forget everything. Forget the false doctors, forget your family, your advisers, your prejudices, the stupid pills and the ridiculous medicines. I am sitting in front of you, and I am healing you.

MARY. You . . . are . . . healing . . . me.

QUIMBY (*dipping his hand in water and sprinkling it over her*). I dip my hand in pure water and pass it over your brow. I feel your pain passing from you into my own hands. You have no more pain.

MARY. No . . . more . . . pain . . .

QUIMBY. No! . . . Lift up your right hand.

MARY. I cannot.
QUIMBY. Lift up your right hand!
MARY (*raising her hand*). My God!
QUIMBY. Lift up your left hand!

(MARY *raises her hand and begins to sob.*)

Now stand up!

(MARY *tries, and sinks back.*)

Stand up! You *want* to stand up! You *can* stand up!

(MARY *stands up.*)

(*Quickly.*) Walk! Walk! Faster! Here! Now over there! (*Softly, to himself.*) She really can walk!

PATIENTS. A miracle!

QUIMBY. Are you well again now?

MARY. I am well! Yes, I am saved. I can move my hands again, I can walk. I am alive. I am alive! I am happy. Dr. Quimby! My Dr. Quimby! My healer! My Saviour! Yes, you have brought me to life again . . . As Jesus raised the little child from the dead, so have you brought me to life.

PATIENTS. A miracle! A new miracle! Dr. Quimby has wrought a miracle!

MARY. A miracle! Is that what one says when for once a desire is fulfilled? And how did it happen? Only as it seemed? With a few poor words and a little plain water? With that simple touch of the hand? Only with that? Oh, you don't know what it is to be sick, paralysed, all but dead. You don't know what it is to find healing. . . . No, it's not done with words and water and a touch of a hand. Is that just plain water, Dr. Quimby? No, there is something higher behind it . . . something much higher. Quimby, you are a prophet of God!

QUIMBY. I am a man, a man who can heal.

MARY. Dear doctor—you yourself don't know who you are. You don't realize what you do. Dr. Quimby, look behind you. (QUIMBY *involuntarily obeys.*) There, behind you, stands the Spirit! Dr. Quimby, look at your hands; in your hands you hold Life itself! Hold out your hands. (*Involuntarily he obeys.*) I kiss your hands. Dr. Quimby, do you know what you have done? You have made me well!

PATIENTS. A miracle! A miracle!

QUIMBY. A miracle, you say? We must seek, we must strive to understand. People talk of miracles because they know so little of the power of the mind. There are no miracles; everything follows natural laws. We must meditate and seek.

MARY. I will cry your name through all the countries of the world, Dr. Quimby. In America your name shall be as revered as the name of George Washington himself. All the people of America, from

Kansas to Massachusetts, from Colorado to New York State, shall thrill at the sound of your name, at the sight of your name in the newspapers. Let me for ever be accursed if I forget your name! Let me for ever be damned from the day when I deny that all that I have and am belongs to you. I go to spread your name throughout the world!

(MARY *hurries out.*)

QUIMBY (*calling after her*). But, my good woman, you owe me ten dollars! My fee, if you please! My fee! Gone! Does she think she can get miracles for nothing?

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE I

1875

RICHARD KENNEDY'S *consulting-room at Lynn, near Boston.*

KENNEDY (*going to the door, opens it and calls*). Next, please!
GEORGE GLOVER (*entering*). I should like to speak to Mrs. Glover.
KENNEDY. Mrs. Baker, you mean. One moment.

(KENNEDY *goes to the door at the back.*)

Mrs. Baker!

(KENNEDY *goes.* MARY *enters.*)

MARY. You wish to see me? You are sure you are not mistaken? Isn't it Dr. Kennedy you want? Have you come about a healing?
GLOVER. I wish to see Mrs. Glover.
MARY. I am Mrs. Glover.
GLOVER. Mother, I am your son.
MARY. Are you ill? Who are you? I don't know you.
GLOVER. I am George Glover.
MARY. What have you come for? What do you want? I am a poor woman. Have you run away from your foster-parents?
GLOVER. They died long ago. I'm twenty-eight now.
MARY. That's not true!
GLOVER. Work it out for yourself then. You are nearly fifty, mother.
MARY. That's a lie.
GLOVER. Can I have something to eat? I'm hungry. You've a beautiful room here, mother.
MARY. It is Dr. Kennedy's room.
GLOVER. Is he your new husband?
MARY. How did you get here? How long are you staying?
GLOVER. I think I shall settle down here, mother. I've had enough of that life. It's got past a joke,—hiring yourself out to other men. Farmers. It's beyond a joke altogether, sweating like a slave for a few dollars a year. You can't save and you can't get on; you remain a labourer for ever.
MARY. You say you're a farm-labourer?
GLOVER. Yes, mother, a farm-labourer. But I've had enough of it. I've seen your advertisements. You're teaching healing, and you must have made a pretty good pile. You've not troubled your head

about me for twenty years. I'm your son, though—do you realize what a hell of a time I've had during those twenty years?

MARY. You think only of yourself. Have you ever once thought of your poor mother in all those twenty years? Have you ever for one moment wondered how life was treating her? Your father died and left no money. I was sick and paralysed. They took you away from me. What could I do, sick and paralysed among strangers?

GLOVER. I'll say no more, mother. Just give me a thousand dollars and I'll go right back to Groton. There's a farm there, and it's bully. I can get it on the cheap, too. Is that a bargain? A thousand dollars, and I'll ask no questions.

MARY. A thousand dollars? Don't you realize that I'm poor? For the last ten years, ever since I was healed, it's been one long struggle. A thousand dollars! What do you think my pupils pay me? And half of them don't pay at all. We're living in bad times. I'm not young any more. Other boys of your age support their mothers. A man must go forward relying on his own strength. You grumble about being a labourer. Remember that Washington was a simple man like you, and he became President. It's up to you to see that you don't remain a labourer all your life.

GLOVER. It's this way, mother. There's a girl called Anna, and her father is the richest farmer in Groton. She does me good just to look at her, and I can have her for the asking as far as she's concerned. But you've got to have money for that sort of thing. Go on, give us a thousand dollars and I'll not trouble you again.

MARY. What a life! A labourer, Anna, a thousand dollars! And this is my son . . . Here you are, here's a hundred-dollar bill (*produces it*). I've struggled years to save that much. It's all I have. Now go.

GLOVER. A hundred dollars? Put another hundred to it—that'll satisfy me.

MARY. I know what I *will* do. I'll come and live with you. Other sons help their mothers, and you can help me.

GLOVER. Oh, all right, mother. I'll go. I'll say nothing.

KENNEDY (*entering*). Excuse me. I thought you were alone, Mrs. Baker.

MARY. It's all right. We've finished.

KENNEDY. A new pupil?

MARY. No.

GLOVER. I'm her son.

KENNEDY. Her son?

MARY (*to* GLOVER). I've no more time now. Good-bye.

GLOVER. And thank you for the money, mother.

MARY. Yes, yes. Go now.

GLOVER. Good-bye, mother.

(GLOVER *goes.*)

KENNEDY. You have a son, Mrs. Baker?

MARY. I only wish you were my son, Kennedy.

KENNEDY. How old is he?

MARY. Eighteen. He was born when I was seventeen.

KENNEDY. I should have taken him for more than that.

MARY. You look quite a child too. Did you know you were handsome, Kennedy? You have fine hands. (*She takes his hands; he withdraws them at once.*)

KENNEDY. Old Schumacher was here to-day—you know, the fellow with the cataract who was at Quimby's. The old fool's still grumbling—he says Quimby would have saved his eye if he hadn't died. As if we hadn't got Quimby's method!

MARY. What's that you're saying, Kennedy? The healing method you learnt from me is mine, my own discovery, my own idea, and nobody else's! We're not mesmerists like Quimby. He was a charlatan. A good man, but uncultured. He could not attract people to him. What did he know of the healing powers of the mind? He merely hypnotized the suffering and betrayed them, like any peddling quack. Sometimes when I sit writing my book, which will reveal the scientific explanation of our whole being and teach healing by the mind, I think of all the sick people who regard us as gods, as gods who alone can redeem them. . . . And really I sometimes feel that a person like me who has learned so much and has written a new Bible of the mind must be in some way related to God. . . . Do you think of me as—divine, Kennedy? If you could know, you good, beautiful child, what a fire rages in my breast, consuming me! I want to take the whole world to my breast, Kennedy, my dear . . . my dear Kennedy. (*She tries to take him in her arms.*)

KENNEDY (*withdrawing*). Let's have a round of poker.

MARY. All right, poker! (*They both sit down.*) I deal.

KENNEDY. Seventeen patients to-day—the market rises. What I say is dollars—just dollars!

MARY. The science of the soul demands a spiritual way of living, and the world offers many allurements and temptations.

KENNEDY. What do you mean by that?

MARY. Twenty cents. Will you pass? . . . There were too many young girls with you again, Kennedy.

KENNEDY. I add twenty cents.

MARY. I know what these young girls are suffering from.

KENNEDY. Straight flush. . . . You've lost.

MARY. It's you they're running after, Kennedy; not truth.

KENNEDY. I heal them. Isn't that enough?

MARY. No. I've told you more than once that you must not take these young girls between your knees and stroke them; that's carnal. You're simply using animal mesmerism. I've warned you before.

KENNEDY. My God, what a hand! . . . Flush! . . . You've lost again. . . . What you're saying may be true, but I don't follow it. When cash is in question I reckon that one method is as good as another.

MARY. Richard, you're a materialist. Come, sit by me. Materialism is a sickness like any other. I shall cure you of it. Sit down. There. Put your knees between mine. Now, I stroke you, so, and you'll never do it again . . . so . . . so . . . (*She suddenly kisses him vigorously.*)

KENNEDY (*extricating himself and standing up*). But Mrs. Baker, that doesn't come into any method under the sun!

MARY. What do *you* understand about it?

KENNEDY. I understand a great deal, and I'm not having any.

MARY. You've had enough, have you? Now you can kneel down and kiss my feet! What were you before I came to you? A factory hand, a box-maker. And I made you into a doctor. I made you rich. Your clothes, your suits, your shirts, your shoes—whom have you to thank for them? You were a nobody, a nobody, and I came and made you famous in Lynn. And just as easily I can break you!

KENNEDY. You're ill.

MARY. I am not ill. I am tired. I've been working too hard. My book, my patients, my pupils, and above all the foolishness of Richard Kennedy—they all sap my strength. Perhaps I have taken too much on my own shoulders. Perhaps it is God's will that I should break down. No. He can't will that. The world needs me. You need me.

KENNEDY. I know what it is you want; and I'm not the man you're looking for. I shall go into practice on my own.

MARY. You can't do that. We have a contract.

KENNEDY. I shall break it.

MARY. If you steal my method I shall prosecute.

KENNEDY. *Your* method? And where did you get it from? Out of Quimby's note-books! You are the thief, not I!

MARY. You talk like a common pickpocket, like a petty swindler. I don't trust you, Kennedy. Do you hear? I don't trust you! Where is our money?

KENNEDY. Here are the accounts. According to contract you get fifty per cent. That makes exactly six thousand and fifty dollars. You can give me the receipt now.

MARY. Six thousand three hundred, if you please! I have kept my own accounts.

KENNEDY. You forget the two hundred and fifty for the rent.

MARY. Thief!

KENNEDY. That'll do. I suppose you know what's being said about you in the town? They say that Mrs. Craft threw you out because you were running after her husband and her son. And they say that at the Websters you tyrannized over the whole household until the son threw you out. And at the Wentworths you cut the carpets to pieces and tried to burn the house down over their heads—simply because you couldn't have everything your own way there.

MARY. You little lying fool! Nobody has ever thrown me out. The Wentworth carpet was worn out anyway, and the fire started

because I had raked some ashes on to an old newspaper. I helped to put it out myself. I'll have you gaoled for slander. I can do it. I can do everything I want. You'll see soon enough!

KENNEDY. You've been writing away at a single book for the last seven years, and it's not finished yet. While I've been healing the sick you've been writing bad poems which nobody will print. You rob a lot of poor fools of their last dollar and call them pupils. But it will all come out one day! And then you'll be alone. You'll lose all your money and die in misery and poverty!

MARY. They shall build me a church.

KENNEDY. And I shall earn money.

(*A knock at the door.*)

Here comes your congregation! Get what you can while the going's good. Double your fees—the poor fish will probably pay! Good-bye.

(KENNEDY *goes.* *The eight* PUPILS *enter :* DANIEL H. SPOFFORD, ASA GILBERT EDDY, SARA BAGLEY, GEORGE TUTLER, S. P. BANCROFT, GEORGE W. BARRY, MIRANDA RICE, *and* ASA T. MACDONALD.)

ALL. Good evening, Mrs. Baker.

(MARY *is silent.*)

EDDY. What is it, Mrs. Baker?

SPOFFORD. What's bitten Kennedy? He cut us all dead.

MARY. He is a traitor. He has betrayed the true teaching. I was deluded into placing my trust in him. He has taken to sheer animal mesmerism for worldly gain. I warned him earlier. Now I have cast him out, and he has threatened me! He threatens to open an independent practice in the town. He will strive with evil forces against my life, against all our lives. The sick will wilt and die under his evil eyes. God is not with him, but with us! Let us pray.

SARA BAGLEY. But perhaps Dr. Kennedy will repent and come back to you. It is written . . .

MARY. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. Let us pray.

ALL. Praise be to God.

MARY. Praise be to God, for He rules over the world, rewarding goodness and annihilating evil.

ALL (*repeating*) . . . rewarding goodness and annihilating evil.

MARY. For the Lord sees the ill-doers who renounce His true teaching and betray His word for gold. And they shall be for ever accursed.

(*The* PUPILS *begin to sing.*)

Darkness.

Scene II

A room in Mary's *house on Broadway, Lynn.*

(Mary, *seated at a writing-table, rings vigorously.* Sara Bagley *enters.*)

Mary. Why doesn't Spofford come?

Sara. I sent someone to call him.

Mary. Go to him yourself and tell him that I order him to come at once.

Sara. But if he is with a patient?

Mary. I order him to come at once!

Sara. I'll fetch him, then.

(Sara *goes.*)

(*A knock.* Spofford *enters.*)

Mary. Spofford! Spofford!

Spofford. You called me?

Mary. I need somebody who can understand my joy! My pain I carry in my own heart, but my joy I must share with another who is near to me. Embrace me, Spofford. Rejoice with me.

Spofford. What has happened?

Mary. My book is out! At last! It has a new title: *Science and Health.* An effective title, a great title! For seven years did I labour at it, in attics and filthy basements; hungry, half-stifled with heat, derided by man and exalted by God; driven in misery from town to town. For seven long years! Seven years—alone. Always alone, with nothing but my faith and my strength. And now it is finished. After seven years! To-morrow a new year begins; and this new year will see my book conquering the whole world. Spofford, there are now two Bibles in the world!

Spofford. If ever there was a Saint, you are one, Mrs. Baker.

Mary. You understand me, Daniel. I know. How many miracles have we performed this year?

Spofford. Thirteen—if we count Joan Tyler who died three days after she was healed.

Mary. And ordinary healings?

Spofford. I myself have healed four hundred sick patients and made three thousand dollars. Your share, up to December 1st, came to 1,500 dollars.

Mary. The Bible was my text-book. The teaching of Jesus and the principle of metaphysical healing are the foundations of Christian Science. I call our Science Christian because it is compassionate, benevolent and spiritual. What is sinful suffers and dies, and I call that the Mortal Spirit. God I call the Immortal Spirit. I have denied His Incarnation. The world of the senses is an aberration, a shadow. The five senses are false witnesses.

SPOFFORD. Your book will expose the falsity of the doctors. They will lose their practices and starve.

MARY. You feel that too? Yes, great things shall happen through us. The world is in confusion. It is for us to bring order out of chaos. And I must have you by me to help me. I love you.

(MARY *approaches* SPOFFORD.)

SPOFFORD. They've printed a thousand copies of your book, and now we must organize the sales. Sara Bagley and George Tutler must go from house to house, from town to town. We'll have to arrange discount terms. Your book must be helped on its way at first. Then, in time, it will be a great help to our practice.

MARY. We say we are Christians; but are we? Christianity is falsely taught. I have thought much about Christ and His Heavenly Father, and it has been shown me that I am to be His successor on earth. I must proclaim it. It is not enough for the sick to come to us for healing. All humanity is sick. Sickness is a mania, and it is for us to liberate mankind.

SPOFFORD. You want to leave Lynn? New York is a more useful size.

MARY. You must not think that I am the chosen one. Many people have said that Mrs. Baker regards herself as better than her neighbours. That is not so. I am not made to succeed God. But what can I do, dear friend, when the divine knowledge streams down on me like rain from the skies? What can one do when one is visited by God Himself?

SPOFFORD. They'd stone you if you said that in public.

MARY. I shall live.

SPOFFORD. We should come up against the law.

MARY. I am your law. The disciples are gathered together. You must realize that the time is at hand. Go to the others. Take council together and act. I wish to be alone to pray.

(MARY *goes out.*)

SPOFFORD. What is it she wants now? What is it? Oh, I don't understand at all, but I must make the others understand.

(EDDY *comes in.*)

Good morning, Eddy. Do you realize that you are the most faithful of us all?

EDDY. You don't really believe that.

SPOFFORD. You are always the first to answer when Mrs. Baker calls.

EDDY. No, Sara Bagley comes before me.

SPOFFORD. I don't see Miss Bagley now.

EDDY. She's playing the harmonium.

SARA (*entering*). Good morning, good morning. I've been composing a little melody for Mother Mary's last poem. Shall I sing it to you?

EDDY. Perhaps it would be better if you did not invent too much

new music, Miss Sara. Too many things are invented in America as it is. A surfeit of worldly goods turns the glance from contemplation of the heavens. When I was travelling down East with Philips's sewing machines I visited many homes where men sat labouring over new inventions. We've already got all we want in America, yet in spite of that the poor go hungry and the widows and orphans starve. In Ohio the farmers have left half their fields lying fallow to send up the price of wheat, and in Louisiana a hundred and eighty-seven baptized nigger-boys have recently starved to death. It is for us to say to all the poor: "Turn your faces to God, and He will provide for you from His superfluity."

SPOFFORD. Amen, dear brother.

(GEORGE TUTLER *and* MIRANDA RICE *come in, hear only* SPOFFORD'S *last words, and echo* "Amen, Amen." ASA T. MACDONALD, BARRY *and* BANCROFT *follow immediately.*)

MACDONALD. "I'm a doctor now," I said to my wife, "and I can't go on living with you any longer. I'll ask Mother Mary for her advice."

SARA. All agitation is sinful. One must live in the harmony of the Spirit.

MACDONALD. I had a patient with me and I was treating her as Mother Mary teaches us. Everything was going well when suddenly my wife rushed in. "Asa," she cried, "I'm not going to put up with this any longer." And then she turned on the girl. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she said, "a young girl like you! If you're ill go to a proper doctor, but don't go about breaking up peaceful homes. He ought to be soling shoes, the lazy devil, instead of messing about with all this hocus pocus! You can bet there's a woman behind it all," she said. "There is, too, and he's given her all our little savings —three hundred dollars." She shouted so loud, my wife, that the patient had a fit.

SARA. What did you say to your wife?

MACDONALD. I prayed to God either to enlighten her or to take her away from me. Mother Mary will help me.

SPOFFORD. Mother Mary has finished her book.

CRIES. Is it out? The book?

ALL. Praise be to Jesus Christ!

SPOFFORD. She has charged me to speak to you.

(*They are all silent.*)

EDDY. What is it, Spofford?

SPOFFORD. I'll tell you what I know, but I don't rightly understand.

SARA. What don't you understand?

SPOFFORD. What it is she wants. There's something she wants of us; she commands us to do something new. But what it was to be she didn't say.

BARRY. Didn't she talk to you about it?

SPOFFORD. Yes, at length; and she went off in a rage.

TUTLER. Is she displeased with us?

EDDY. Is she going to leave us?

SPOFFORD. She simply said—take council among yourselves, and act.

SARA / MIRANDA } Goodness!

BARRY. What are we to do?

SPOFFORD. She talked about a successor to Christ.

BARRY. The time is at hand!

SARA. The time has come! In my neighbour's house a child was born. He came into the world without a cry. On the third day he cried aloud—"My God, my God," and died.

BANCROFT. In Paris the poor drove out the rich and proclaimed the Commune. All men are equal, and what is yours is also mine. But none of them believed in God, so they were wiped out with fire and murder.

MACDONALD. Yesterday by the river I had a vision. I saw our Mother Mary, and she wore a crown, and the crown shone; and over her head stood the moon and the sun. And then I heard the voice of an old fisherman, and I knew that the voice came from God. Three times he called on a name—Mary! Mary! Mary! Then I went home and drew up this resolution. (*He pulls a paper from his pocket.*)

SARA. Read it to us.

MACDONALD (*reading*). To Mother Mary. In view of the confusion in which the world is lost, and in view of the darkness which hides the spirit, and above all in view of the saintliness of Mother Mary, who is a healer above all other healers, and has been vouchsafed the knowledge of God Himself—in view of all this, we beg you, Mother Mary, to read to us from your book, to sing Psalms with us and to teach us how the world may be healed every Sunday morning.

SPOFFORD. It's our job to practise healing, not to talk about it. I have no visions and I hear no voices: but I have reason. I know that if you found a new Church, which is what you seem to be hankering after, you'll be persecuted by all the orthodox parsons and howled down by the newspapers.

EDDY. We must build on Mother Mary.

(*All sing.*)

MARY (*entering*). Spofford!

(*All suddenly break off their hymn.*)

I told you to act, and you stand round singing hymns in broad daylight! Have you delivered my message?

SPOFFORD. I told them I was supposed to give them a message . . .

MARY. And?

SPOFFORD. I couldn't do more than that, since I don't understand what you want myself.

MARY. You did not understand me?

SARA
MIRANDA } Mrs. Baker.

MARY. Silence!

MACDONALD. Mrs. Baker . . .

BARRY. Not now.

MACDONALD. We have drawn up a resolution, Mrs. Baker, we pupils. It's for you, Mrs. Baker. I'll read it.

MARY. I do not wish to hear it.

MACDONALD. We wanted to ask you to read to us from your book every Sunday morning, and to pray with us and sing with us and explain your healing.

MARY. I do not wish to listen to anything. I have heard nothing. I no longer hear the voices of this world. I desire the quiet life. All these multitudinous healings rob me of my strength. I have taken the pains of a thousand suffering people into my own virginal body. I have done enough. I have done too much. Who will buy my book? Who will read it? I am a poor woman. I shall leave you. Not one of you understands me.

MACDONALD. But we do understand. (*Points to his resolution.*)

MIRANDA. We'll raise a fund for you.

EDDY. You must not leave us. We should be lost without you.

SARA. We should be beggars without you.

EDDY. It was you who healed me, and I belong to you, and everything that is mine. Each week I will give you all that I have so that you can stay with us and preach to us.

MIRANDA. I'll give ten dollars.

MACDONALD. I'll give fifteen.

SARA. I'll give eight.

TUTLER. I'll give six.

BARRY. I'll give twelve.

BANCROFT. I will give you the strength of my hands, for I take no money from the sick.

SPOFFORD. And I am against all this! We are doctors, and it's you who made us doctors. What do we want with churches?

MARY. Not a temple of marble, stone and glass; no. We do not need that. I shall give you a new, an invisible Church; in ourselves we shall achieve the Kingdom of God on earth.

SPOFFORD. And lose our practices and our money!

MARY. God will provide. As for you, you are relieved of your commission. Spofford has not shown the least understanding; not the least. And I . . .

EDDY. I will speak to him, Mother Mary.

SPOFFORD. Eddy had better hold his tongue.

MARY. He shall speak. I love to hear him speaking.

EDDY. I can also be silent.

SPOFFORD. An innocent is better silent.

MARY. He shall be the only one to speak for me. Yes, he alone. Spofford, I have seen into your innermost heart. It is not pure. God

is with the innocent, not with the children of this world. I wish to speak with Eddy. Leave me alone with him.

(*All go except* MARY *and* EDDY.)

Eddy, we must marry.

EDDY. Whom do you want to marry?

MARY. You.

EDDY. Me?

MARY. Have you ever loved a woman?

EDDY. Mrs. Baker . . .

MARY. Do you love me?

EDDY. But Mrs. Baker . . .

MARY. Do you fear to become my husband? I shall make you great. I shall raise you up—you shall be greater than Spofford. I used to trust him, but I was deceived in him. He is my enemy. You love me. Swear that you love me.

EDDY. I came to you from San José. I had been ill for three years, and they told me about you so I came here and saw you. You healed me. You saved my life; I belong to you.

MARY. Have you never had a woman?

EDDY. I was poor. Nobody has ever loved me.

MARY. I shall make you happy. I too was poor. I too was sick. I too was not loved by any human being. Our marriage shall be a spiritual union. We shall go away. You know I have discovered Truth and Healing; but must truth and healing be confined to Lynn? I have a mission. There are few who know yet that I can liberate mankind; yet there is no sickness and no distress when one acknowledges truth. From all the States of America they will flock to me. I shall be the star of all the suffering. We shall be rich—millionaires. Don't shrink from that: money is power: and power alone carries conviction. Nobody will believe a poor man. I shall have a Church, and you will share all this with me.

EDDY. You are our Mother Mary. All that you say I believe. All that you command I do.

MARY. Everything—you will do everything?

EDDY. Everything.

MARY. Kiss me.

EDDY. I have never kissed a woman before.

MARY. Come. (*She embraces him.*) But you're strong, Gilbert. You have sinew, muscle. You are a man. (*She kisses him again.*)

EDDY. Oh, Mary . . .

MARY. We'll get married to-morrow. You shall take over Spofford's practice. He has most of the sick, and he's earned too much already. I will find him another job. He can organize the sales of my book, instead of Barry.

EDDY. Won't Spofford mind?

MARY. In this house I command.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Some Years Later

On Broadway at Lynn. Mary's *study. A door in the far wall leads to* Eddy's *consulting-room, from which* Mary *enters.*

(Mary *looks round cautiously, then goes to the door and beckons.* Dr. Noyes *enters.*)

Mary. Will he die?

Noyes. You should have called me earlier.

Mary. Do you think he's been poisoned?

Noyes. Typical case of heart-failure; I've prescribed digitalis. Send someone to the chemist for it at once.

Mary. Please—not so loud.

Noyes. Why?

Mary. You know well enough that you and I are really opponents. I don't believe in orthodox medicine. I'm all against you; but I had to call you in. Eddy must live.

Noyes. I don't know whether you realize that you've badly neglected Mr. Eddy's illness?

Mary. I've prayed for him.

Noyes. A practical doctor could have cured him.

Mary. We are the healers.

Noyes. Quacks! Give your husband the digitalis, and I'll call round again in an hour's time.

Mary. Can't it be done without medicine? I've always taught that medicine is poison, and I believe it too.

Noyes. Did you call me in, or did you not?

Mary. I was desperate, and . . .

Noyes. You called me in because your husband was ill. And at the same time you forbid strangers who come to you to have anything to do with doctors. Now that you have called me in you will please carry out my directions. I'll bear the responsibility.

Mary. You say you'll be back in an hour—couldn't you please bring the medicine with you then? I can't send anybody to the chemist, you must realize that.

Noyes. Yes, I realize.

Mary. And you'll keep professional silence about this, won't you? Nobody must know that you've been here. Swear it!

Noyes. Is this the way out? (*Pointing to the other door.*)

Mary. Go down the back staircase, please.

(NOYES *goes.*)

I will pray. I know I shall save Gilbert. He must not die.

(*The bell rings.* PAMELA SARGENT *comes in.*)

I forbade all noise.

PAMELA. The police are here. They're searching the whole house. They want to question you.

MARY. Only God can question me. Tell them that.

(PAMELA *goes; two* POLICEMEN *enter.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN. Are you Mrs. Baker Eddy?

MARY. Take off your cap.

(*Both men obey her.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN. You say it, Tom. She's got a look in her eye as though she'd like to murder the lot of us!

SECOND POLICEMAN. I must ask you for your keys, ma'am. We have a warrant to search this house! (*He approaches her.*)

MARY. You don't know who I am.

(*Both men retreat a pace.* OXFORD, *the Sheriff, comes in.*)

OXFORD. You are Mary Baker Eddy?

MARY. Who sent you here?

OXFORD. I am the Sheriff, John Oxford. I regret having to take these steps, but Dr. Noyes, who ran into my men at the back entrance, reports that your husband . . .

MARY. Send your men outside.

(*He obeys her.*)

Sit down.

OXFORD. Your husband, Eddy, and your pupil, Arens, are both suspected of conspiring to murder Daniel H. Spofford. Arens I have already had arrested. Eddy, according to Dr. Noyes, is unfit to be moved.

(MARY *is silent.*)

Have you anything to say?

(MARY *is silent.*)

The accusation does not seem to surprise you.

MARY. Like everybody else I've read in the *Lynn Herald* that Spofford is reported missing by his friends. I have also read that they have identified a corpse in the mortuary as being his.

OXFORD. What have you to say?

MARY. That God has punished him.

OXFORD. And you were His instrument?

MARY. Am I accused too?

OXFORD. No.

MARY. Have you a shred of evidence to support this monstrous indictment of my husband?

OXFORD. It is known that Spofford was your pupil; that he had the most lucrative faith-healing practice in Lynn; that you took this practice away from him and gave it to Mr. Eddy, whom you immediately married; that Spofford left you and set up in competition against you; that you entered into a whole series of actions against him, even accusing him of witchcraft; that you lost every one of these actions; that Eddy and Arens must have known you wanted this man who was robbing you of your pupils, your money and your power, out of the way!

MARY. I have no power for anyone to take away from me. If God Himself speaks to me, can anybody take that away from me? Who can rob me of my spirit?

OXFORD. You are a clever woman. Nevertheless, you once said before witnesses: "Spofford will do little more damage in Lynn; God will strike him down." Do you admit saying this?

MARY. I am ready to repeat it in Court. I have an idea, and that idea will alter the face of the world. I am here to reform Christendom. The expositors of Christianity have terrified their fellow Christians with threats of hell after death. But the life of a Christian to-day is, in fact, hell before death—in this miserable existence, haunted by fear and greed, by materialism and the rule of material things. If you knew, Mr. Oxford, what happiness you would find if you could truly realize that there is no life after death simply because death does not exist, because the bodily existence which tortures us so is nothing but a bad dream, a chimera imposed on mankind by false teachers! If you knew! Don't you long for happiness, Mr. Oxford?

OXFORD. Do you know the inn-keeper, James I. Tuff?

MARY. A man of that name came to the house yesterday, and wanted to see Mr. Eddy.

OXFORD. And?

MARY. I sent him away.

OXFORD. He is at present in custody. He has confessed to everything. Two men called Miller and Libby gave him five hundred dollars to lure Spofford out of town and kill him in the woods. He took the money and went to Spofford and told him the whole story; and Spofford took him to his heart and called him his friend. They went off to have a drink together, and on the way, as they were crossing the park—it was night, of course—the two men, Libby and Miller, fell on Spofford and killed him. Tuff stood there weeping and oppressed by his five hundred dollars blood-money. Miller and Libby are—your husband, Eddy, and your pupil, Arens, the murderers of Daniel Spofford!

MARY. Who says so?

OXFORD. The inn-keeper, Tuff.

MARY. And I tell you that Spofford is alive.

OXFORD. His body is in the mortuary at this moment.

MARY. A body, but not Spofford's. Spofford is alive.

OXFORD. Have you any actual proof, or is this simply one of your celebrated visions denied to us common men?

MARY. You are a clever man, and yet you mock at the Spirit? How old are you? Have you always lived in Lynn?

OXFORD. I am thirty-three, and I come from Boston.

MARY. Don't worry any more about Spofford. He is alive. Tell me, my friend—what do you live for? What do you ask of this world? Who are you?

OXFORD. You forget that I am not your pupil, Mrs. Eddy. I am here as Sheriff of this town.

MARY. I've never set eyes on you before, but it seems to me that you trust in me. I believe you have a call, Mr. Oxford. Answer me—forget who you are and who I am and all this childish murder story—do I look like a murderess? Look at me. You are no ordinary man, Oxford; that I can see. You don't really believe that God created judges and murderers, healthy people and sick people, shopkeepers and kings, do you? God created only men and women, and He wanted them to rejoice and be happy; and He endowed them with a spirit, so that they might live in His Spirit. I teach no more than that, you know. I work no miracles. You will be my pupil yet, Oxford, I can read it in your eyes. I can see that you too long for the kingdom of the Spirit on this earth! It is for us to banish all vice and disease, all unhappiness and discontent, all fear of death or of life. Don't you call that a new religion, Oxford? A faith which will make men happier? Can it really be called life—the existence humanity leads to-day? And why should all this misery exist when there is already in the world all that is necessary to build a heaven on earth—it is all there. Only the insight is lacking. To bring that is my task. Yet they say I am not good! Oxford, I know that you will fight at my side, that you aspire as I aspire—my son, my pupil . . .

OXFORD. I . . . You confuse me . . . You are right, yes, you are right. But it is not the place, not the time. Here . . .

POLICEMAN (*entering*). Report for you, sir.

OXFORD. Well?

POLICEMAN. The deceased Spofford is alive, sir. He has just reported at the station.

(POLICEMAN *goes.*)

OXFORD. Mrs. Eddy, you are a great woman. You are right, Mrs. Eddy, right. The proceedings shall be dropped immediately. A woman like you could not possibly live among murderers.

MARY. God be with you, my son. You will find the way and come to me.

(OXFORD *goes off.* MARY *hurries to* EDDY'S *door and opens it.*)

Gilbert, are you awake? Are you in pain? I am praying for you, Gilbert.

(*A knock at the other door.* MARY *closes the sick-room door and goes towards the other door, then remains standing in the middle of the room.*)

Come in!

(BANCROFT, MACDONALD, SARA BAGLEY, MIRANDA RICE, TUTLER *and* BARRY *enter.*)

I thank you all for coming here. Let us pray together for our brother Eddy.

MACDONALD. We have not come to pray.

BANCROFT. We are here to accuse.

BARRY. You have often said you teach us to know truth.

BANCROFT. Where is your truth?

MACDONALD. You have said you wished to lead us on the true way to Christ.

BANCROFT. Where is your way?

MACDONALD. You have said you would lend us your own virtues.

BANCROFT. Where are your virtues?

SARA. We weep for you.

MIRANDA. You sin!

BANCROFT. We eight pupils, who were the first to gather round you and believe in you, have decided, and in this resolution recorded our decision, to leave your Church. You have left undone what you promised to do. You wished to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, the Heavenly Communism, according to the teaching of Christ. But you have not shared your goods with us. You have a house. You live in luxury. You have money in all the banks in the town. You love money.

MACDONALD. Is that the service of the Spirit?

BARRY. Is that how you teach that all material things are worthless?

TUTLER. Is that why you have taken from each of us three hundred dollars for your teaching? Did Christ take a single dollar from His disciples?

SARA
MIRANDA } And so we leave you!

ALL. And so we leave you!

MARY. When God commanded me to gather pupils round me and to teach them His ways of healing and His word I never thought of money. Have you forgotten that a Voice called me and said: "Take from each one of your pupils three hundred dollars"? Who set you up in your practices? Who made you wealthy? Who found you happiness?

MACDONALD. You are a usurer! You demand fifteen per cent from everybody, and you go to law against your own pupils and summons them if they get in arrears with their payments.

SARA. You suspect us all! I took an extract from your new manu-

script to ponder over it and understand its inner meaning—and you called me a traitress and fined me fifty dollars.

MIRANDA. You married Gilbert Eddy because you loved him in the flesh. And yet to us you say your marriage is a spiritual union. But I know that you love unchastely. I know everything. You are a hypocrite!

SARA. When you are at home you wear glasses for reading instead of using your own eyes, which you taught us to heal through the power of the Divine Spirit.

MARY. All that I do is God's command. Have you anything more to say? Go home and tear up your absurd resolution; fast and pray; repent and come back to me. Perhaps then I shall forgive you. Go, Sara Bagley! Away with you, Macdonald! Off with you, Barry!

BANCROFT. None of us will listen to your orders.

MARY. Silence, Bancroft, when I am speaking!

BANCROFT. You're not our leader any more.

MARY. You refuse to obey?

CRIES. We refuse!

MARY. Then I expel you, I expel all of you from my Church. Go! Go!

(*They all go.*)

(MARY *goes into the sick-room and reappears pushing* EDDY *before her in a wheeled chair.*)

Gilbert! Gilbert! Did you hear how they turned on me? Did you hear? And it was I who raised them from the dust. They all fall upon me because I help them. All, all. But you, Gilbert, you are still faithful to me. You alone. You never doubt me, you will always stay with me. You will rescue me from the depths into which they have cast me. . . . Why don't you answer me, Eddy? Speak! What are you smiling at, Eddy? . . . He's not asleep—his eyes are open—open—he won't speak—he looks as though . . . He is gone! . . . Eddy . . . Eddy! Eddy! Help! Help!

(NOYES *hurries in; hurries over to* EDDY; *bends over him; examines him; raises him up.*)

The medicine! Give him the medicine!

NOYES. He is dead.

MARY. No! No! No! That isn't true! Oh, God couldn't do it! Not that! Not to me! Not to me! God can't abandon me! Listen, Gilbert, I love you! Do you hear? I need you, I can't live without you . . . Oh, I've healed a thousand people—the lame have danced and the deaf have heard—and now, my God, give me the strength to heal this single man . . . Our Father—Mother God! God who heareth all our prayers . . . Thy Kingdom come . . . It is come, it is always with us . . . Doctor—why do you call yourself a doctor if you cannot heal? Save him! Save him!

NOYES. He is dead.

MARY. Spofford has poisoned him! Kennedy has poisoned him!

NOYES. I will open his body and show you the valves of his heart. I can prove to you that there is no poison in this body . . .

MARY. What do you know of the invisible poisons of the soul? Far, far more deadly than all your drugs—hatred, the deadliest poison of them all. You can see broken bones and the wounds of the flesh —but the wounds made by the evil thoughts of wicked men will for ever be hidden from men like you.

NOYES. Haven't you seen the evening papers? Will you always persist in your pride? Your society is dissolved; your scandals have been exposed; nobody in Lynn will ever believe in you again. You are shown up once and for all. It's all up with Mary Baker Eddy and her Christian Science!

MARY. I shall live, and millions shall be with me!

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

Scene I

Years Later

Boston. Mary's *house. A great hall divided into five sections by low office partitions. On every partition a shield. On the shields :*

1. *Private Secretariat of Mother Mary.*
2. *Healing.*
3. *Press ; Publishing ; Propaganda.*
4. *Treasury and Church.*
5. *Education and Organization.*

In the background a writing-table and a praying-desk with a crucifix. Three Workmen *are busy hanging a larger-than-life portrait of* Mary Baker Eddy *on the wall directly above the writing-table.*

First Workman (*pointing to the picture*). Low-down crook !

Second Workman. Crook ? She's a ruddy saint !

Third Workman. You've got it lop-sided.

Second Workman. She cured me properly.

First Workman. What with ? Curds and whey ?

Second Workman. Praying.

First Workman. What did she touch you for ?

Second Workman. Ten dollars a time.

First Workman. Fool ! You got better by yourself.

Third Workman. Up a bit with that right-hand nail.

Second Workman (*taking a paper from his pocket*). She has an ad. in the paper every day. In all the papers, she has (*reading laboriously*) " Superannuated liver healed in half-hour session." . . . Here's another : " Cancer of the face healed within a week."

First Workman. And you let 'em kid you with that ? Pull yourself together ! She lives on other people's troubles, she does. She runs a business with God as a sleeping partner. She's just a hell of an organizer, that's all there is to it. You've got to organize everything these days.

Second Workman. I know a lot that believe in her.

First Workman. She's a knowing cuss, I must say. A few years ago she'd only got a couple of rooms, and now she's got a swell house on the finest avenue in Boston.

Third Workman. She gets the dough for that from the bosses. They pay her to promise mutts like me and you heaven on earth—the

poor mutts never think to notice that that only applies to the millionaires—and they've got it already!

FIRST WORKMAN. Look out, she's coming!

(MARY *enters with five young* SECRETARIES. *The* WORKMEN *go off.*)

MARY. Everything must be organized nowadays. Goodwell, ten thousand post cards of this portrait. Send them out at fifty cents net—or one dollar with autograph.

FIRST SECRETARY. Don't you think we could get two dollars for the autograph?

MARY. One should have the moral strength to renounce that sort of money-making. How do you like the picture?

FIRST SECRETARY. It's magnificent.

MARY. A little too old.

(MARY *sits down at her writing-table.*)

(*The* SECRETARIES *sit down.*)

FIRST SECRETARY (*rising and going to* MARY). There's another letter from the leader of the New York branch—the widow, Mabel Smith, offering to put a big sum into the movement if you will give her a free hand to reorganize the New York branch. That's the third time she's written.

MARY. What's the matter with the woman? For the third time decline the offer. And you'd better send a secret-inspection commissioner along, too. Well?

FIRST SECRETARY. And here's one from Mary H. Plunket, a Detroit pupil. She wants to know whether she can start a Christian Scientist matrimonial agency to be run on "metaphysical principles."

MARY. What on earth is she talking about?

FIRST SECRETARY. She says that orthodox marriage has served its purpose and should be swept away. She herself is apparently living with a man whom she calls her "spiritual affinity." They're living together without reference to orthodox marriage and marriage laws. She says that since all bodily things are merely a dream and a delusion she prefers it to be as pleasant a dream as possible.

MARY. Is there anything about that in my book?

FIRST SECRETARY. No.

MARY. Then write to this woman and tell her that I forbid anything of the sort, and that any association of her views with my teaching will end in prosecution.

(FIRST SECRETARY *withdraws to her table.*)

SECOND SECRETARY. Thirty of our six hundred healers in New York have written to say that they can no longer subscribe to the healing methods of the Christian Science Church and therefore wish to withdraw from the Church in order to take up the study of—um—medicine.

CRIES FROM THE OTHER SECRETARIES. Shame! Shame!

(SECOND SECRETARY *withdraws to her table.*)

MARY. Well?

THIRD SECRETARY. Our solicitor writes to say that judgment has been given in the six actions against infringement of your copyright. We have won five of the actions and the defendants are ordered to refund all royalties due. The sixth, unfortunately, we have lost.

MARY. Write to the man and tell him that I shall appeal against the judgment in the sixth action.

(THIRD SECRETARY *withdraws to her table.*)

FOURTH SECRETARY. The treasury stands at 12,371 dollars. The Milwaukee faith-healers find themselves in arrears with their poll-tax.

MARY. Write then, and say that the pupil who pays will be successful.

FOURTH SECRETARY. Mabel Smith, leader of the New York branch, has made no payments for the last month.

MARY. This Mabel Smith again!

(FOURTH SECRETARY *withdraws.*)

FIFTH SECRETARY. Three reporters from New York desire an interview.

MARY. Make an appointment for to-morrow. Has Mr. Foster arrived? He was telegraphed for to come this afternoon.

FIFTH SECRETARY. Mr. Foster is waiting now. And there's a gentleman from Lynn, too. He refuses to give his name.

MARY. Have them both brought in.

(DR. FOSTER *and* JOHN OXFORD *enter.*)

You are Dr. Foster. How old are you? How long have you been working in my Church? Where did you get your diploma? Are you married? Are you energetic?

FOSTER. I am Ebenezer Johnson Foster, doctor of medicine, Chicago, and doctor of homeopathy, New York.

MARY (*to* OXFORD). I've met you before. Who are you? Why didn't you give your name to my secretary? You have been led to me by Fate. You are no ordinary man.

OXFORD. That's why I have come to you.

MARY. God has opened your eyes. When did I heal you?

OXFORD. I can't go on prosecuting thieves any longer, thieves, criminals, bad criminals, petty criminals, habitual murderers and accidental murderers. What a life! Twenty years of man-hunting! It's been getting on my nerves for a long time now.

MARY. What is your profession?

OXFORD. I am John Oxford . . .

MARY. You . . .

OXFORD. Yes.

MARY. The sheriff!

OXFORD. Didn't you know?

MARY. I know everything. You have resigned your position and

come to me here in Boston. You are tired of judging men, and now you long to heal them. You have faith. You have much to give, John Oxford.

OXFORD. My whole fortune; twenty-five thousand dollars.

MARY. He that giveth shall receive.

OXFORD. You were the first great person I ever met. I loathe America; I hate the poverty of the common people. I was born in England, in Suffolk. I want to serve you. If you care to raise your finger you can conquer the world. I know. You are humanity's last hope. I want to be your secretary—not a healer, simply your slave. You are a genius, and I shall follow you.

MARY. Do you hear, Dr. Foster? That's how I like men to be. That's how men must believe in me, that's how they must want to serve me. How long have you been in my Church?

DR. FOSTER. I resigned my position at the hospital four years ago. I read your book, I attended your pupils' meetings, I watched your success.

MARY. And you are a qualified doctor. The actions against us are multiplying daily, trumped-up actions. I need a man like you who understands the mind of the other side, a man who can beat the doctors at their own game, whom nobody will dare to prosecute.

FOSTER. I was a doctor myself, Mother Mary. I know these people who manufacture illnesses.

MARY. Dr. Foster, John Oxford—I love you both. You shall live in my own house and sleep near me.

FOURTH SECRETARY (*who has just been handed a telegram*). A wire from Mabel Smith of New York.

MARY. Read it, please.

FOURTH SECRETARY. It just says: "Coming. Mabel Smith."

MARY. Did I send for her?

FIRST SECRETARY. We'll send her packing soon enough!

SECOND SECRETARY. We must be very careful.

FIRST SECRETARY. Why? What are you afraid of?

SECOND SECRETARY. She is our richest member.

THIRD SECRETARY. She wants to be right on top!

FOURTH SECRETARY. She is dangerous!

FIRST SECRETARY. She's the widow of the oil king.

THIRD SECRETARY. She's the most beautiful woman in America. All the men run after her.

FOURTH SECRETARY. She is dangerous!

FIRST SECRETARY. Last week she had a secret session in New York —summoned the chief members of the New Orleans, San Francisco, Chicago and St. Louis branches to it. All expenses paid out of her own pocket.

FOSTER. She is up to something; anyone can see that. There was a paragraph about Christian Science in the *New York World* in which Mother Mary wasn't even mentioned. But this Mabel Smith was referred to seven times and had a photo into the bargain.

FOURTH SECRETARY. She is dangerous!

MARY. I shall call her to account.

FOURTH SECRETARY (*repeating a servant's message*). Mabel Smith is here.

MARY. I will talk to her alone.

(*All except* MARY *go;* MABEL SMITH *enters. She hurries towards* MARY *and extends her hand, which* MARY *ignores.*)

MABEL. Greetings, Mother Mary. How wonderful it is to see you at last! And how young you look; what lovely clothes! Anyone who didn't know would take you for thirty at the most! Every night I pray to God to keep you for us.

MARY. Sit down, Mrs. Smith. The foundation of every successful society must be obedience. On obedience I have founded my Church. Do you know the paragraphs which concern obedience?

MABEL. I'm afraid I don't quite understand.

MARY. I am testing you.

MABEL. Well . . . "No member must on any account disobey the orders of the Leader."

MARY. Go on!

MABEL. Please . . .

MARY. Go on!

MABEL. "Everybody will be judged by his actions; he who obeys shall be blessed; he who disobeys shall be condemned."

MARY. Whoever disobeys shall be condemned. You have conspired against me. You called the leaders of the New Orleans, San Francisco, Chicago and St. Louis to a secret session. You paid for an article in the *New York World* and arranged that my name should be kept out of it, while yours was mentioned seven times. You are behind with your payments. You are a conspirator against the true teaching. . . . Vindicate yourself if you can.

MABEL. I am not here to vindicate myself, as you call it. I have come to make a proposition.

MARY. I know all about that proposition, and I refuse to consider it.

MABEL. But I offer you a million dollars cash!

MARY. The Society is ready to accept bequests of any sum.

MABEL. I admire you. A woman of the people, forty or fifty years old, ill, penniless, finds a great idea and founds a new theology on it—a sect, a great movement. . . . To-morrow Christian Science could conquer all America. But it won't. It won't, simply because the Leader, because Mary Baker Eddy . . . (*She breaks off.*)

MARY. Go on! "Because Mary Baker Eddy . . ." Why don't you go on?

MABEL. Because the Leader . . . Oh, why shouldn't I say the truth? . . . After all, it's the principle that matters, not individuals. . . . Yes, I tell you to your face: it's you who are holding us back from victory. You are old. You are infirm. You might die to-morrow.

MARY. I am not old. I am not infirm. I cannot die.

MABEL. I offer you a million dollars cash to hand over the leadership of the Christian Science movement. You could retire to a nice house just outside the city. Your name would remain the star and beacon of the movement: but you would bind yourself by contract never to appear again in public, to issue no new publications, to undertake no healing, and to live in complete seclusion.

MARY. And who would succeed me?

MABEL. That would soon be seen.

MARY. You please me. You are clever—fairly young, too, although you seem to be past your prime. Perhaps you are called to be my successor.

MABEL. Perhaps.

MARY. And you really believe that everything can be bought? Goods and land, houses and people, conscience, truth, ideas, emotions, States, religions—even me? Isn't there enough corruption in the world already? Is everything to have its price? Is there to be nothing immune from dealing and bargaining, markets and prices? Is everything to be buyable? Is there to be a market for everything? A bundle of shares for the death of a father? A deed of mortgage for a daughter's marriage? . . . Is love to be bought on long-term credit? and faith on an I.O.U.? And God Himself, I suppose, is to be had if the cheque is large enough! And I myself am to be bought? Even me? Oh, no!

MABEL. You have misunderstood me.

MARY. Have I? And you? Have you understood me? You call yourself my pupil—you really want to be a Christian? And you say you've read my book? I wonder! Haven't you read there, set down in black and white, that the Spirit is real and matter nothing but a shadow? And yet you talk like this of money! Have I ever taught my pupils to grub for money? *Are* you a Christian?

MABEL. I am a Christian, and I shall continue so. I am a Christian Scientist, and I shall continue so. But what is one to do when you, with your articles of faith, oppose the teachings of the Church itself? What is one to do when the Church turns and persecutes you for being un-Christian? You teach that there is no fear, no suffering, no pain, nor sickness in the world; that there is no hell, no sin, no death. And that is a plain denial of life and the world and the essence of Christianity. The whole of order, human and divine, is founded on one thing—fear: fear and suffering—fear of punishment in this world, fear of hell in the next.

MARY. Christian Science is infallible. God Himself has vouchsafed all to me. He has appeared to me. He and He alone is the Author of our Church.

MABEL. And Quimby? Doesn't poor Quimby get a look in anywhere? I have in my possession letters and newspaper articles in which you yourself name Quimby as the originator of your method, and praise his greatness.

MARY. The letters are forgeries. You will hand them over to me at once.

MABEL. I shall do no such thing. I shall have them photographed and published. . . . But you will spare me that necessity, I'm sure. You will accept my offer. Nobody can refuse a million dollars. And you love money so. Nobody knows better than yourself that you are old, infirm, ugly, diseased. I have heard about the fits you have in the night—convulsions, hallucinations. . . . And you have morphia injections too—I know! When your husband lay dying you called in a doctor! You are an uneducated woman, a parvenu. You can't even write your books without the help of hacks. You are a discredit to the Movement. You must withdraw; you must disappear!

MARY. One moment, please.

(MARY *goes to the door and rings.*)

MABEL. Yes, I shall be your successor! Yes, yes! I have money, beauty, connections—the President's wife is my cousin. All the most prosperous branches are with me as it is, and to-morrow all Christian Science will be behind me. I shall conquer all America! You simply don't realize what an instrument it is you have in your hand; you are incapable of using it. . . . To-morrow I shall give orders for a golden Church to be built in New York, the greatest Cathedral in the world —so that all the world can see the power and healing strength of Christian Science . . .

(SECRETARY *enters.*)

MARY. Call my other secretaries, and with them Brother Oxford and Brother Foster.

MABEL. What are you doing? What do you want now? I warn you not to use force. Two private detectives are waiting outside with my coachman; they have orders to call the police if I don't return in an hour. Oh, I know all about your methods!

(*They all enter.*)

MARY. Foster, throw this little whore of Babylon downstairs! She has blasphemed God in my person. I appoint you leader of the New York branch as from to-day. Go at once and start cleansing that stinking stable of filth and corruption; then report to me. I rely on you, Foster.

FOSTER. Come, Mrs. Smith.

MABEL. You want a fight, do you? You shall have one, then. You can throw me out to-day. But to-morrow I shall have the majority behind me.

MARY. One person, with the help of God, is always a majority.

Darkness.

Scene II

MARY'S *Bedroom.* MARY *lies in bed; the room is lighted by a feeble night-light.*

MARY (*dreaming, and talking in her sleep*). Eddy! Eddy! . . . I'm suffocating . . . Go away, Mabel Smith . . . Away, George . . . Nothing—I'll give you nothing . . . Eddy, save me, you are dead . . . Help! (*She awakens.*) . . . Jesus! Lord Jesus! (*She rings.*) . . . Will nobody come? (*She rings again.*) . . . Have they left me to die here, alone, in the dark? I will not die! You get cold, you freeze and rot . . . I'm afraid . . . Help! I will not leave this world! Oxford!

OXFORD (*entering*). Is the pain so bad?

MARY. Oxford, is it you? Give me the mirror! Light the lamp! (OXFORD *obeys.*) . . . I'm alive . . . It's so stuffy to-night; isn't it? Pitch-black. There's no air, no wind. . . . Open the window. Can you hear the leaves rustling in the darkness? Look at the sky, Oxford—can you see the stars? Yes, yes? Oh, that is a comfort to my heart! I love the stars, Oxford; I am an old woman. Yes, Oxford, yes; I know it. But when I look up and see the stars dancing and their quivering radiance—then I believe again, everything, everything, I say. And you believe it too? That I believe everything?

OXFORD. You are a great woman.

MARY. I am a great woman, of course. I am a very great woman. Give me the mirror. Bring the lamp here. Do I look old? Am I so very ugly? Do the children run away when they see me and cry "Witch!" after me? Oh, the wrinkles. So many wrinkles. And the grey hairs. . . . My hair was brown, quite brown; it hung down to my knees. Really, Oxford—to my knees. . . . Help me, I'm dying! Air!

OXFORD. Shall I have the pupils wakened to pray for you?

MARY. Morphia!

(OXFORD *gives her an injection.*)

I may do that, Oxford—you understand . . . I may do anything, everything. I stand above the law. God allows it me. . . .

OXFORD. A great woman, Mrs. Baker, may do anything.

MARY. I'm better now. I had a horrible dream, Oxford. First there was my dead husband, and he lay beside me as he used to do in life; and I said to him, "Why are you so cold, Gilbert, cold, like stone?" And then it was Mabel Smith's Church, the New York Church, and my whole society was gathered there, and my son George Glover and his wife and nine children; and they all knelt down before me . . . I was hanging there on the wall, as Mother Mary, and they cried, "Holy Mother Mary, give us money, give us a million dollars," all eleven of them. And then the picture of Mother Mary fell, I fell from the wall and shivered into a thousand splinters of glass . . .

What did that dream mean, Oxford? Can you interpret it? Call my secretaries! I saw everything in my dream. I must dictate new orders.

OXFORD. It is two in the morning. They are all asleep.

MARY. Waken them immediately! No time to be lost! I am an old woman. I have no time to lose. There are still things to be done. What would become of you all? What would become of mankind? . . . Take the lamp over there, into the corner, on the big table.

(OXFORD *goes.*)

(*Praying.*) Our Father-Mother God, all harmonious! Thy Kingdom is come; have mercy on us; feed the famished affections and deliver us from sin, disease and death.

(OXFORD *returns with the* SECRETARIES.)

Sit down at the table and write. Has Foster come yet?

FIRST SECRETARY. Not yet, Mother.

MARY. Foster must come. Write. Proclamation to all branches of our Society: Within two months a fund must be raised by the faithful of every land. For I, Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christ Scientist, shall raise a visible Church in Boston, a Church of marble and gold and purple glass. Two million dollars must be raised. The Church shall be called the Mother Church—Have you "Mother Church"? . . . Is Foster here yet? I must speak to him. . . . Second Secretary—write: To the head of our publishing office. I must have a newspaper; it shall be called the *Christian Science Journal*, and it shall appear within three months . . . Has Foster come yet? . . . Third Secretary—write to the faithful of every land: on the dedication day of the Mother Church representatives of every branch must come before us here so that we may celebrate together. This celebration shall be called the Feast of the Spirit's Rejoicing, and it shall be spoken of far and wide, and miracles shall be performed.

OXFORD (*who has withdrawn, reappearing with* FOSTER). Foster is here.

MARY. Foster, come here. Closer. Have you done what I said?

FOSTER. The New York branch has expelled Mabel Smith, and the sickness you healed has overtaken her again. She is desperate, and she implores you to pardon her and heal her again. She swears repentance, and vows to place her whole fortune at the disposal of our Church.

MARY. Write to Mabel Smith and say that I will not see her until the dedication day of the Church I have just commanded to be built. Then she shall come to me. Foster, closer—I want to talk to you alone. The others can go to bed. Thank you.

(*All go, save* FOSTER.)

I made you leader of the New York branch, and I am pleased with you. You pleased me the moment I set eyes on you. You have beautiful

eyes, steady and true. I must have you near me. I am alone, Foster, quite alone. You must stay near me? Will you do that?

FOSTER. Of course, but my branch . . .

MARY. I shall adopt you. You shall be my son. You shall bear my name. You shall be my heir. To-morrow the notary must come.

FOSTER (*kissing her hand*). My mother.

MARY. My son.

Darkness.

SCENE III

The Stage is divided into three parts:

Foreground: The street is front of the Mother Church, Boston.

Middle Distance: A room in the Church. MOTHER MARY'S *room. Two great windows with images of* MOTHER MARY *reading and* MOTHER MARY *praying.*

Beyond this room the nave of the Church itself is later revealed, with the chancel in the background.

THE STREET

(NEWSBOYS, CHURCHGOERS.)

FIRST NEWSBOY. *Christian Science Journal! Christian Science Journal!*

SECOND NEWSBOY. Feast of the Spirit's Rejoicing! Feast of the Spirit's Rejoicing!

THIRD NEWSBOY. Ten cents! Ten cents!

FIRST NEWSBOY. Rockefeller's letter to Mother Mary! Rockefeller's letter to Mother Mary!

FIRST CHURCHGOER. Are there many Scots here?

SECOND CHURCHGOER. There's twenty-seven come from Edinburgh alone.

(*They pass on.*)

FIRST NEWSBOY. *Christian Science Journal!*

(THIRD CHURCHGOER *buys a copy.*)

FOURTH CHURCHGOER (*to* THIRD CHURCHGOER). They say Mother Mary's room is done all in gold and onyx. Twenty thousand dollars' worth. Nobody else is allowed in.

SECOND NEWSBOY. Ten cents!

(SCHUMACHER *and* BROWN *enter.*)

SCHUMACHER. I know all about this praying racket. I've had some myself.

BROWN. You prayed for health?

SCHUMACHER. They prayed; I paid. And the more I paid the blinder I got.

BROWN. You could see better before you took it up?

SCHUMACHER. No . . . I was a barrister. I handed over everything I made to this damned crook. Now I'm a reporter. The boss said to me, "Schumacher," he said, "you're blind." "Sure, boss," I said, "and a blind man with his wits about him sees a damned sight more than a hundred fatheads with both eyes popping."

BROWN. Have you interviewed her yet?

SCHUMACHER. I knew her when she was still a nobody—in Lynn, where she ran a business with Kennedy. I knew Quimby too—the fellow she pinched it all from. And now I'm a blind old man; but I still see enough.

(MARY, *dressed in a loose, black mantle, enters the church with* OXFORD, *unobserved.*)

BROWN. We'd better be getting inside. How about having a shot at that fancy room of hers?

SCHUMACHER. The great cow!

BROWN. They say there'll be some miracles to-day.

SCHUMACHER. Sure. Everything on tap!

THIRD NEWSBOY. Mother Mary's latest miracle! Mother Mary's latest miracle!

SCHUMACHER. Two million dollars, this dump cost!

BROWN. Mother Mary's latest miracle!

(*Both exit.*)

FIRST NEWSBOY. *Christian Science Journal!* The Feast of the Spirit's Rejoicing!

(*The banker*, WILLIAM MONEY, *enters with his* WIFE.)

MONEY. I shall hang myself, I tell you! You can't convince me. I've tried eleven times already. I've jumped out of the window, I've jumped into the river, I've lain down in the snow, I've gambled at Monte Carlo, I've thrown myself in front of trains and buses. All for nothing. I can't bring it off. I've had enough of it all. I'm rich, and yet there's nothing I can see worth having. Being rich is hell! The poor simply don't know what they're talking about.

WIFE. Don't excite yourself so, William.

MONEY. I will excite myself; I find it soothing. Shares and mortgages, bank accounts and pleasure cruises, servants to dress you in the morning, and servants to undress you at night. It's too much of a good thing, I tell you. It's an intolerable burden. No sleep, no peace. Pity the poor rich!

WIFE. You'll find Mother Mary can even help you.

NEWSBOYS. *Christian Science Journal!* Ten cents! Latest miracle! Ten cents! Christian Science! Ten cents!

Mother Mary's Room

Oxford *helps* Mary *off with her cloak. Beneath it she is wearing a white gown, falling in heavy folds to the floor. On her breast is a great cross of gold.*

Mary. Is my dress all right? Do I look pale?

Oxford. The church is crowded out already. There are thousands waiting outside in the street.

Mary. We must open all the doors.

Oxford. Mabel Smith is waiting to see you.

Mary. What does she want? Tell her I can't see her.

Oxford. You yourself told her to come. She won't be put off. She is half crazy.

(Mabel *enters.*)

Mary. Is Foster here yet?

Oxford. Nobody seems to know.

Mary. What is the meaning of that?

Oxford. The New York branch . . .

Mabel (*kneeling*). Save me, Mother Mary, save me. Once before you healed me, and now I am sick again. I am dying of fear. Tell the brothers not to pray for my death any more . . .

Mary (*interrupting*). What were you saying about the New York branch, Oxford?

Oxford. We don't know yet whether they are sending a delegation or not.

Mabel. Hear me, Mother Mary. I have sinned. I repent. I kneel at your feet. I pray to you with my whole being. You are so far exalted above me. Look down on me and have mercy.

Mary. How many delegations are there, Oxford?

Oxford. Won't you . . . ? (*indicating* Mabel Smith). Three hundred and seventeen altogether—a hundred and eleven from Europe, and the rest from China, Australia, New Zealand, India—from every corner of the world.

Mary. Are the reporters here?

Oxford. They are waiting to interview you, now.

Mary. I am not to be disturbed.

Mabel. Help me! Help me! Foster promised you would help me. You must help me!

Mary. What did Foster promise?

Mabel. He said he loved me. He said he would pray for me; he said you would help me.

Mary. Foster loves you? It was he who expelled you from the Society.

Mabel. He seduced me. He took me into his bed and swore that he would speak for me.

Mary. Into his bed? . . . Have you got that statement with you? (Mabel *hands her a paper.* Mary *reads.*) . . . "I, Mabel

Smith, widow, of New York City, repent my sins"—and so on and so forth . . . where is the clause about your money? . . . Ah, here it is . . . "I hereby make over my entire assets, unconditionally and without reserve, to the Christian Science Church through our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy" . . . Good . . . Good! . . . And now what do you want?

MABEL. Heal me.

MARY. Go to Canada, to some little village. Live there five years among the farmers and work for our Church. Then you will be healed.

MABEL. You say that? You want to test me again? No—no—no . . .

MARY (*to* OXFORD). Take the woman away.

MABEL. You thief! You swindler! Give me back that paper! Give it me!

(OXFORD *leads her out and immediately returns with* FOSTER.)

OXFORD. Here's Foster.

MARY. Oh, you've come.

FOSTER. As a delegate of the New York branch.

MARY. No.

FOSTER. I don't understand.

OXFORD (*answering a knock at the door*). Nobody can come in.

GLOVER. But I'm her son, I tell you!

(GLOVER *pushes* OXFORD *aside and enters, followed by his* WIFE *and* CHILDREN.)

Hallo, Mother. A lovely church you've got here?

MARY. What do you mean by coming here? Didn't I tell you to stay in your village?

GLOVER. This is Anna. Children—here's your grandma. Give her a kiss.

OXFORD. The congregation is waiting, Mother Mary. . . . Mother Mary will see you later.

MARY (*to* FOSTER). Foster, you have betrayed me with Mabel Smith.

FOSTER. Mother . . .

MARY. I am not your mother. I cast you out. You have been stubborn and puffed up with pride. Instead of leading the New York branch back to me you have spent your time in brothels and gaming-houses. Now I cast you out from my Church. (*To* GEORGE GLOVER.) As for you, you can go straight back to your home. I am ashamed of you. I would have made you President of America, but you cannot even speak correctly and your letters are like an illiterate schoolboy's; they make me blush to read them. I would have given you every dollar I possessed, gladly, if you had made yourself worthy. Now go.

GLOVER. Can't I stay for the service?

MARY. No, go home. I'll see that you are given a hundred dollars for every member of your family.

(*The organ is heard.*)

OXFORD. They are waiting for us, Mother Mary.

THE CHURCH

Passing through the rows of the faithful, MARY *makes her way to the chancel. The congregation sings a psalm. When* MARY *enters the whole congregation rises to its feet. She mounts the pulpit. The congregation seats itself. To the right of the pulpit the* FIRST READER; *to the left the* SECOND READER—*these are the* FIRST *and* SECOND SECRETARIES.

MARY. Let us pray.

(*All fold their hands, and for a few moments there is silence. Then* MARY *hands the Bible to the* FIRST READER.)

Let us hear the Word of God.

FIRST READER. St. John's Revelation: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth." In this wise was the coming of Our Mother in God foretold.

MARY (*handing her own book to the* SECOND READER). Let us hear my word.

SECOND READER. "Man is Divine. Whosoever acknowledges that there is no sickness, no old age, no sin, no death—he is healthy and shall live in everlasting joy." Thus saith Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health.*

MARY. I have come to you. Hear me, brethren! Hear me, my sisters! For thirty years I have been on my way to you; for I was summoned and charged with a message for mankind, to go among men and to say: "Rejoice, for the time is at hand!" Rejoice! Rejoice! It is said that you must suffer, that suffering is good, good that you should fear the night and shrink from the day and drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs. Good that you should war with one another, brother with brother, doctor with the sick. Men are like wolves: they torture, hate, and martyrize; they do murder with weapons and with words. It is said that in all your hearts is seated original sin. But all that is false. False! All that you have been taught is false—fear of death and terror of life. But I say unto you: the world is good and all that is in it. Mankind is born to joy: we must adore the day end praise the night; we must cherish the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and all that lives under them. Cast away the illusion of disease! Cast it from you now! The treachery of death, the lunacy of hell! You are here to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth! Rejoice!

VOICES. Mother Mary!

A WOMAN (*running to the pulpit, then turning to the congregation*). Rejoice! I can walk! My leg was crippled and I walked with crutches. I can walk! (*Kneels to* MARY *and kisses her robe.*)

SECOND WOMAN (*likewise*). Rejoice! I can hear! I have been deaf for ten years; I had forgotten the sounds of the world; but your words sounded in my ears. I have understood your words! (*Kneels to* MARY.)

MONEY (*likewise*). Rejoice! I was going to hang myself! I was tired of life; it oppressed me. But now I am healed. I am in love with life! Rejoice with me!

SCHUMACHER (*likewise*). Rejoice! Rejoice! I have blasphemed a saint! I was blind; I can see!

VOICES. Rejoice! Rejoice!

(*All press round* MARY. *The organ is heard.*)

MOTHER MARY'S ROOM

(MARY, OXFORD *and the five* SECRETARIES *enter.*)

OXFORD. This is the triumph of Christian Science!

FIRST SECRETARY. We have conquered. We shall conquer all America.

SECOND SECRETARY. Mother Mary shall speak in all the great cities of the world.

MARY. I shall never speak again. I am going to leave you. I am going to retire. I can't bear the noises of your Feasts any more, nor the unceasing voices of your pupils and the cries of the sick. I am going to find peace. I shall go alone—Oxford shall come with me, nobody else. Inform the *Christian Science Journal* that I wish to see nobody, that I wish nobody to write to me, nobody to visit me.

FIRST SECRETARY. What will become of us?

MARY. It is all arranged.

(*The* SECRETARIES *go out.*)

OXFORD. Mother Mary?

MARY. I am an old woman, Oxford. I am quite alone . . . I *must* be alone.

THE STREET

NEWSBOYS. *Christian Science Journal! Christian Science Journal!* Report of the Festival! Full story! All the latest! Seventeen new miracles! Full story! Seventeen new miracles! Ten cents! Ten cents!

TWO FRESH NEWSBOYS (*rushing by*). Special edition! Special edition! Mary Baker Eddy says good-bye to the world! Ten cents! Mary Baker Eddy says good-bye to the world! Ten cents! Special edition! Ten cents! Ten cents!

ACT FIVE

SCENE I

Some Years Later

Living-room in GEORGE GLOVER'S *block-house, South Dakota. Round the table are seated* GEORGE, *his wife* ANNA *and a crowd of* CHILDREN, *all eating their dinner.*

ANNA. There's rumours about that she's dead.

(GLOVER *grunts.*)

That ought to mean a good fat wad for us?

(GLOVER *grunts.*)

We gotter get a horse—really. . . . Tom Fox wants to get rid of that grey of his—the dapple one.

GLOVER. She's spavined.

ANNA. I said I didn't believe it about her being dead.

GLOVER. He drove the grey mare to market and shook pepper up behind to make her trot.

ANNA. We could get parson to write . . . five hundred dollars would pay for the nag.

GLOVER. Haven't I told you I'll not go near her never any more? And I'm not writing either. Let her be, her and her Church. She may be a woman, but she ain't no mother . . . (*To one of the children.*) Quit kicking against that table!

ANNA. That was someone knocking, that was.

(*The door opens and* FOSTER, SCHUMACHER *and* MABEL SMITH *enter.*)

FOSTER. Good morning, sir.

GLOVER (*without rising*). Morning.

FOSTER. I am your brother.

GLOVER. I've not got any brothers.

FOSTER. I am Dr. Foster Eddy.

GLOVER. Oh, that's you, is it? Anna, dust one of them chairs. Clear out, kids!

(*They go.*)

SCHUMACHER (*to* MABEL). Nine children. It's scandalous!

MABEL. There's another head-line for us! "Founder of Christian Science lets nine grandchildren starve."

FOSTER. Mrs. Mabel Smith, representative of the *New York World*; Mr. Schumacher, our lawyer.

GLOVER. This here's my Anna.

(*They all sit.*)

FOSTER. Our mother is worth millions—I suppose you knew that?

GLOVER. I don't read the newspapers.

FOSTER. Does she ever send you any money?

ANNA. George wrote three times—not a line from her. That guy Oxford wrote instead.

GLOVER. He's her secretary-man.

FOSTER. He's a nasty little upstart! He's after her money, that's what it is. He and one or two others in league with him are virtually holding her prisoner and collaring the cash. She's senile—finished—in her second childhood. She's made a will and we're to go begging. I ask you—is that right? Is that just?

ANNA. Well, George?

FOSTER. We'll have her in the Courts yet. She told the tax collector she'd no more than nineteen thousand dollars.

MABEL. And she's really got millions. She robbed me of my whole fortune. She persecuted me and tried to pack me off to Canada. But I wasn't having any. I've seen through her now, and I'll get my own back on her, and then some!

SCHUMACHER. She swindles everyone she meets. Twice she's done the dirty on me. Do I look a fool? I'm an old man now. I've seen life all right. America's grown great. America's given healing to the world. But this woman has gone a bit too far. When she was dedicating her first church she made a speech. I was there to report it for my paper; I was going to show her up. But I never heard anybody speak like she did. Never. She got me properly, and I yelled out she'd done a miracle. I could see again. There it was; I could. But next day I had to go to a doctor; I couldn't see at all. There's your precious miracle! Folks seem to like it.

FOSTER. I'm a doctor, and I can tell you that this woman simply hypnotizes—it's mass hypnotism, that's all there is to it. She's dangerous.

ANNA. Parson says she's no Christian even.

FOSTER. Sure. He's got it right. However, we're bringing an action. We've got to sue her, Glover, you and I. We're the heirs and we're going to get the dollars—you agree?

GLOVER. No.

ANNA. Yes.

SCHUMACHER. I'll look after the law part of it for you. You leave it to Cyrus T. Schumacher. We're going to get her declared *non compos*.

MABEL. And my paper, the *New York World*, will bear all costs arising out of the action in return for exclusive rights on all interviews, articles and documents. Our paper is prepared to fight for the cause of justice and morality in America.

FOSTER. Mr. Schumacher—the authorization paper. (SCHUMACHER *produces a document.*) Will you sign here, Glover?

GLOVER. She's got me scared.

MABEL. You have all the people of America behind you.

SCHUMACHER. This action will mean spiritual liberation to all the millions she's bamboozled.

FOSTER. Think of *our* millions!

ANNA. Think of the horse, George!

GLOVER (*taking* FOSTER'S *pen and writing*). George . . . Glover.

Darkness.

SCENE II

A Room in MARY'S *country house at Chestnut Hill. Left background, a small stairway leading to a door hung with a portière. Right, a glass door leading to a balcony overlooking a park.*

MARY *is seated motionless in a wheeled-chair at a table which is covered with stones and mineral specimens. Right and left* OXFORD *and* PAMELA SARGENT, MARY'S *companion, rise from easy chairs.*

MARY. Louder!

OXFORD. Brother Goodwell is here.

MARY. Louder! Louder!

PAMELA (*sotto voce to* OXFORD). Her hearing is very bad again to-day.

OXFORD. She sent the doctor away again. The Mayor of Boston came yesterday, but she refused to see him.

PAMELA. She's refused to see anybody since those lawyers were here.

MARY. The stone!

PAMELA. What is it she wants?

OXFORD (*taking up a stone*). Here it is. A very rare mountain crystal. I managed to get it for half its true value.

MARY. The stone!

(OXFORD *hands it to her.* MARY *reaches clumsily for it and it falls to the floor.* OXFORD *picks it up.*)

My glasses!

PAMELA. We must have given her too much morphia last night. She's all to pieces.

MARY. My glasses.

(PAMELA *puts them on for her.* MARY *takes the stone and gazes at it.*)

Stones . . . more . . . more . . . more stones . . . I want all the stones . . . I must have them . . . You should love nothing but stones . . . They're the only things worth helping . . . The only things worth talking to . . . the only things fit to live with . . . I will see no more people . . . Man was made in God's image? . . .

Man was God's only mistake! . . . What did he want, Oxford? . . . What did he want?

OXFORD. You must try to forget, Mother Mary. Don't think about it any more.

MARY. What did he want? You must tell me, Oxford. An alienist—a sheriff—a summons—an inquiry into my sanity. I'm not dying fast enough for them, Oxford. They're starting an inheritance action—my son Glover, my son Foster—good, kind sons—rascals! . . . What did he ask me? The alienist? . . . What did he ask me? Me—Mary Baker Eddy, the prophetess of Boston. Mother Mary, the head of a thousand churches . . . What did he ask me? Tell me, Oxford.

OXFORD. He asked you if you knew who you were, if you knew your name.

MARY. Do I know my own name? Do I know who I am? . . . Go on!

OXFORD. Why do you torment yourself like this?

MARY. Go on!

OXFORD. Then he asked whether your money was in bonds or stocks—whether you knew what a stock was—whether you knew what a bond was.

MARY. Do I know how my own money is invested!

OXFORD. Now Goodwell is here, Mother Mary. Goodwell. Your faithful pupil, Goodwell. And to-day a thousand pilgrims are coming. They will gather here, outside in the park—ten thousand of the faithful from every part of the world, representatives from every city in the world. Your pupils, Mother Mary. They will come to see you, to hear your word. Ten thousand who will go back and say Mother Mary lives—she spoke to me, one among ten thousand. . . . But before that great meeting there will be some journalists coming to see you—representatives of the greatest papers in the country. They are going to ask you four simple questions. I've got them here now. They have been very carefully formulated. . . . The first question will be: Are you in good health? You will answer: Yes, I am in very good health. The second question is: Have you any other doctor than God? And you must answer: No, I am upheld by His Almighty arms. The third question will be: Do you still take your walk every day? You must answer: Yes. And lastly they will ask: Do you yourself control your investments and all your business affairs? And your answer will be: Yes.

MARY. I don't want to do it.

OXFORD. But you must, Mother Mary. The life of our Church is at stake.

MARY. I answered the lawyers' questions when they came. Isn't that enough?

OXFORD. Our enemies are active. The lawyers and the doctors were bought. We must prove to the world that you are alive and in your right mind.

MARY. I can't do it. I am in such pain. I am ill. I am old. I am ugly.

OXFORD. Pamela will see that you are looking your best, and I shall give you an injection.

MARY. I want to lie down . . . in bed. I don't want to see anybody.

OXFORD (*giving her an injection : sotto voce to* PAMELA). Now see what you can make of her.

(PAMELA *fetches the necessaries from a cupboard and begins to make* MARY *up.*)

A little more rouge . . . still more . . . now blacken the eyebrows a bit—red on her eyelids . . . some blue, too—that makes her look much younger . . . now the atropine . . . don't forget the rings . . . pearls round her neck . . . then that big golden cross . . . you've got her ermine cloak ? . . . And the diamond clasp ? . . . Is that everything ?

PAMELA. Everything.

OXFORD (*taking in the new effect*). Brilliant, positively brilliant ! Well done, Pamela. Nobody could possibly notice anything now.

MARY. Who will ask the questions ? You, Oxford ?

OXFORD. One of the journalists, a woman.

MARY. Who is she ?

OXFORD. Mabel Smith of the *New York World.*

MARY. Mabel Smith of the *World* ? . . . Mabel Smith ? . . . Smith ?

OXFORD. There are many Smiths. (*To* PAMELA.) It's time now. Wheel Mother Mary into the next room. When I give the sign you must help her to stand—she must stand there (*pointing to the door*) and hold on to the portière. You had better stand just below her, there, so that you can keep an eye on her.

(PAMELA *pushes* MARY *out.* OXFORD *rings, and a* SERVANT *appears.*)

Bring the reporters in.

(*The* SERVANT *goes out. The* JOURNALISTS *enter, among them* MABEL SMITH.)

FIRST JOURNALIST. At last !

SECOND JOURNALIST. Some moment, this !

MABEL. We must keep our eyes skinned !

THIRD JOURNALIST. There's the celebrated collection of stones. The finest in the world.

FIRST JOURNALIST. They say it's worth forty thousand dollars.

SECOND JOURNALIST. She sure does herself in style !

THIRD JOURNALIST. You've said it !

MABEL. All with money wrung from suffering humanity.

OXFORD. Mrs. Baker Eddy is ready to receive you. I must first remind you of your promise. You will sit here (*pointing to three chairs*),

and Mrs. Smith will put the four questions we agreed on. Not a word more. After the questions you will leave the house at once. Mrs. Smith . . . we have agreed to this interview simply to dispel the malicious rumours which people have been circulating about us here. I warn you ! . . . Will you take your seats, please ?

(*The* JOURNALISTS *sit down.* OXFORD *rings. The portière is parted in the middle and* MARY *is revealed.*)

The first question, please.

MABEL (*rising*). Are you in good health ?

MARY (*after some moments*). What ? What was that ?

OXFORD (*very loud*). The first question.

MARY. Yes . . . Yes . . . I am in very good health.

MABEL. Have you any doctor other than God ?

MARY. What ? . . . What ?

OXFORD. Speak louder, please.

MARY. No . . . no . . . His Almighty Arms . . . His arms . . . .

OXFORD (*agitated*). The third question !

MABEL. Do you still take your walk every day ?

MARY (*clutching at the portière*). I . . . Yes . . .

MABEL. Do you yourself control your investments and all your business affairs ?

(MARY *collapses.*)

OXFORD. Out of the room—all of you !

(*The* JOURNALISTS *have jumped up.* MABEL SMITH *runs quickly to the portière and bends down over* MARY.)

Back !

MABEL. She's painted ! Like an old whore !

OXFORD (*pulling her by the arm*). Get out !

(*The* JOURNALISTS *and* MABEL *go out.* PAMELA *and* OXFORD *carry* MARY *to an arm-chair. There is a silence.*)

PAMELA. Hadn't we better put her to bed at once ?

OXFORD. No, no ! She'll have to speak ! She *must* ! The whole Church is at stake ! Give me that syringe !

(*The sound of distant singing is heard.*)

MARY. You have betrayed me, Oxford . . . You are my enemy . . . I am quite alone . . . You knew who was coming to ask those questions . . . Everybody is persecuting me . . . My enemies . . . are coming . . . They're coming . . . I am afraid . . . Help . . . Help . . . I am afraid . . . afraid . . . Why don't I die . . . I want to die . . .

(OXFORD *gives her an injection. The singing is louder.* OXFORD *opens the balcony door.*)

OXFORD. Sister Pamela, help Mother Mary.

(PAMELA *helps* MARY *up.* MARY *sways on her feet.*)

You must walk ! Walk !

PAMELA. Walk !

OXFORD. You must speak ! You must speak !

PAMELA. You must speak ! Speak !

OXFORD. You are well ! You can speak ! Walk ! Speak !

PAMELA. Walk ! Speak !

(*With a tremendous effort* MARY *walks to the balcony door. The singing ceases. Cries of rejoicing ring out. Then silence.*)

MARY (*rigid*). Hear me . . . brothers . . . (*She turns away from the balcony.*) Hear me . . . sisters . . . Rejoice . . .

PAMELA (*whispering*). Turn her round ! Look what she's doing !

(OXFORD *makes a cautioning gesture.*)

MARY. Rejoice . . . rejoice . . . I come . . . I come . . . Rejoice . . . There is no death ! . . . There is . . . no . . . death . . . There . . . is . . . no . . .

(*She collapses, lifeless.*)

PAMELA (*crying out*). She is dead !

(OXFORD *crams his hand over her mouth and points down to the crowd of the faithful.*)

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